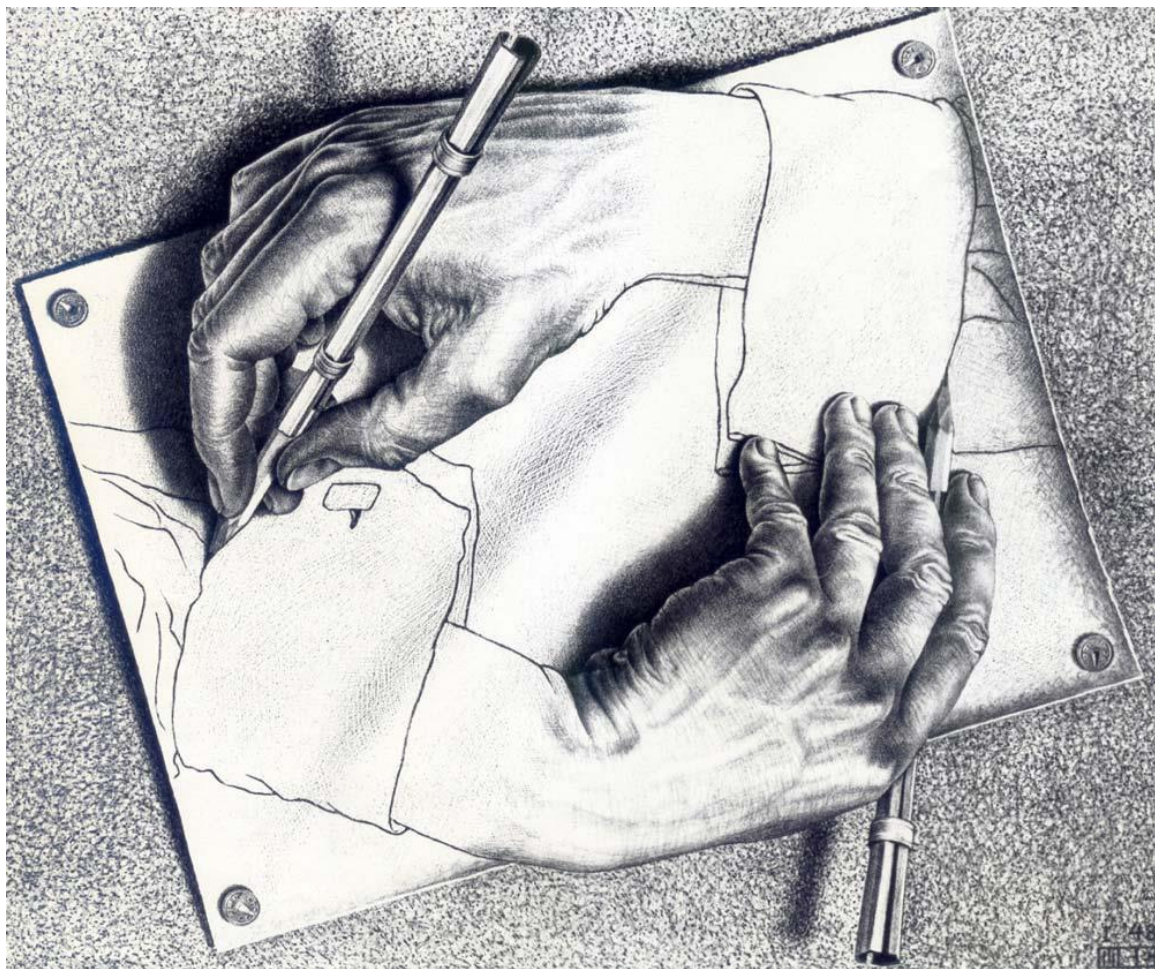


# *Pen & Pencil Magazine*



**Volume Eleven: Spring 2023**

## **Volume Eleven: Pen & Pencil Magazine**

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If you have a submission for the **Pen & Pencil Magazine** feel free to contact the Editor in Chief at

pbruskiewich @ gmail.com.

## Table of Content

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Pen & Pencil Welcomes Submissions .....               | 6   |
| Prose.....  | 7   |
| When I was a Little Girl by Isabella Montsouris ..... | 8   |
| Infidelity by Yuki .....                              | 13  |
| Pictorial: A Living Tribute to Boucher .....          | 19  |
| Baseball Crazy by Aki.....                            | 20  |
| The Death of Dada by Malcolm Cowley .....             | 25  |
| My Power over Boys by Gisele R.....                   | 63  |
| Boy Have I Been a Naughty Girl by Laura.....          | 83  |
| Science Fiction.....                                  | 99  |
| Boy Was He Right! By Patrick Bruskiewich.....         | 100 |
| Pictorial: How Now! My Little Chickadee .....         | 111 |
| Canadian Poems.....                                   | 113 |
| Poems by Isabella Valancy Crawford .....              | 114 |
| Poems by Ethelwyn Wetlierd .....                      | 119 |
| Poetry .....  | 122 |
| If Only They Knew by Aki Kurosawa .....               | 123 |
| What Loneliness Is by Patrick Bruskiewich .....       | 125 |
| Pictorial: Something Biblical ... ..                  | 126 |
| The Big Apple is Back! by William Webster .....       | 127 |
| If you are a dandelion by Rose Lang.....              | 129 |
| Mathematics and Science.....                          | 130 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Returning to the Moon with a Modern LEM by Patrick Bruskiewich ...   | 131 |
| History.....   | 137 |
| Fearing God and Nothing Else by Winston Churchill .....              | 138 |
| Art .....  | 156 |
| Our Splendid Minotaur by Reiko .....                                 | 157 |
| Phallus Anthropologia by Yuki.....                                   | 162 |
| Vitruvian Man by Keiko.....  | 173 |
| The Best of Pen & Pencil (2019-2022).....                            | 182 |
| A Tribute to Stephen Hawking by Patrick Bruskiewich.....             | 183 |
| She's Lost Her Head by Sarah Haxby.....                              | 184 |
| He Knew the Pleasures of my Heart by Annie Gavani.....               | 195 |
| Remembering the Best of Her by Patrick Bruskiewich .....             | 196 |
| Pictorial: The Modern Thinker.....                                   | 220 |
| Falling in Love with a Beast by Emily Mathews.....                   | 221 |
| Seeing Stars in the Paris Night Sky by Rose Lang .....               | 236 |
| What Are Prairie Oysters? by William Webster .....                   | 243 |
| Let All Sins be Forgotten by Patrick Bruskiewich.....                | 249 |
| Half-Girl and Half-Boy ... by Isabella Montsouris .....              | 255 |
| The Warehouse Party by Gary McCrae .....                             | 273 |
| Five Poems by Stephanie Cui.....                                     | 289 |
| Ten things to do with a Polaroid Camera by Isabella Montsouris ..... | 295 |
| In Praise of St. Sebastian by Rose Lang.....                         | 300 |
| How are they hanging ... by Isabella Montsouris.....                 | 310 |
| Something is Missing from Paradise by Patrick Bruskiewich.....       | 316 |

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*“This year I turn twenty four. Why ... dear God ... do we have to grow up?  
It was so much more fun being a little girl of four than a girl of twenty four.”*

Isabella Montsouris

## Pen & Pencil Welcomes Submissions

Obelisk Press of Vancouver is pleased to publish the Eleventh edition of *Pen & Pencil Magazine* which serves to feature the work of aspiring writers. The *Pen & Pencil Magazine* welcomes submissions on a quarterly basis.

In this edition we have essays from Isabella, Yuki, Aki, Gisele and Laura, as well as some poetry from Aki Kurosawa and William and Rose. There is also a section titled the Best of Pen & Pencil (2019-2022).

The *Pen & Pencil Magazine* board is comprised of the unpaid volunteers: Please feel free to send your short story, prose, poetry and artwork submissions to the Editor in Chief at

pbruskiewich @ gmail.com.

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

## Prose



## ***When I was a Little Girl by Isabella Montsouris***

A few weeks ago I was helping my mother clean out a closet in our old home. She is getting ready to sell it and retire to a small apartment. It is hard to say goodbye to familiar surroundings. Our old house is where I grew up. In the closet we found an old shoe box with some pictures my mother took of me when I was a little girl.

This is one of her favorite pictures. I am three and we are at the beach. I am making foot prints in the sand. I don't remember doing this.



The next picture she showed me I am barely four and I am sitting on the back stairs playing with a black kitten Charbon, with his mother looking on. The other cats in the litter were white like their mother, but Charbon was pure black. If you look closely you can see that I am talking to Charbon. I even

remember what I am saying “... don’t be scared.” I am trying to get him to walk over to me.



He kept on pacing nervously back and forth until his mother walked behind him and nudged him and he sort of tumbled into my waiting hands and meowed in annoyance. I remember setting him on my lap to pet him and when he decided to leap off me his claws scratched me.

As a little girl I use to run around *sans habillement* whenever I could during the summer in our backyard. We had a tall fence around our back yard and so no one on the other side could catch me being so cheeky.

Here I am jumping from my favorite tree into the soft sand of my sand box. I think I was six at the time. The feeling of the cold soft sand against my sex and backside was very pleasurable!

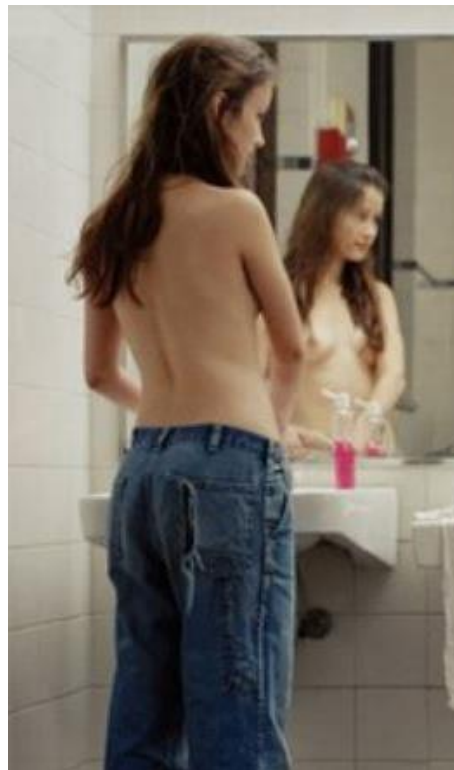


The next picture my mother showed me I vaguely remember. I think I was ten at the time. We were on a camping trip. The boy next to me is KT.



You might remember KT as the boy whose testicles did not drop on their own (the doctors had to later help him with this). If you look you will see his scrotum is empty and he is very tiny for a boy his age.

This next picture my mother showed me she took of me was a few years older and when I was becoming self-conscious. My breasts were filling out and my hips were forming. I was no longer her little girl.



I was fourteen at the time my mother took this picture of me in my jeans. It is unbelievable that ten years had passed between the picture of me with my kitten and me as a teenager.

Now that Covid is over we have been able to travel once again. We went on a trip to Hawaii during Christmas and while I was floating in the ocean at an empty beach my mother convinced me to take off my bikini so she could photograph me. I am holding my top in my right hand and my bottoms in my left. The feeling of the warm sun against my naked body was wonderful. Why do we have to wear bathing suits? Why can we not just swim naked?



I should tell you that my mother is an artist. I have grown up around male and female figurative models. I understand my mother's artistic sensibilities. So I let her take photographs. Maybe one day she will publish her photographs?

This year I turn twenty four. Why ... dear God ... do we have to grow up? It was so much more fun being a little girl of four than a girl of twenty four.

## ***Infidelity by Yuki***

[**Japan**] This is a difficult story for me to tell. My ex-boyfriend and I have known each other since we were old enough to walk. My family and his go back many years. Our parents were expecting us to marry, and settle down. But he did things that made it impossible for me to trust him and so it is unlikely we will become a couple and have our own children together.

I have been away at university in Vancouver for the past two years. While I was in Vancouver I shared an apartment with three close friends from high school, Keiko, Reiko and Aki. I returned home last January. I cannot tell you where in Japan I live. If I did, after reading my story, you would probably want to intrude in my life. And you would also want to embarrass my ex-boyfriend and he would get angry and take it out on me. I don't want that. He has a very bad temper. We separated on Valentine's Day.

I haven't been home in two years. Beginning last year I heard whispers that my ex-boyfriend was being unfaithful to me. He is the assistant manager of a grocery store (the only job he has had since graduating from high school – his father is the store manager). My ex-boyfriend likes to delivery some of the grocery orders and has been getting a bit too intimate with some of the women in the city I live. He has also tried to seduce the younger cousin of one of my school friends.

When I returned home in January my girlfriends gave me a party but decided not to invite my ex-boyfriend. At the time we were still going out but I was told before flying home from Vancouver not to tell him when I was returning.

The night of the party after we had dinner and their boyfriends starting to drink and sing, we girlfriends left the party to go for a walk. We walked three blocks over to sit in front of a Love Hotel, hidden in the shadows across the street. After sitting for a few minutes I saw my ex-boyfriend arrive at the Love Hotel with the younger cousin of the girlfriend who walked us over from our party.

Before I could get upset she said ... “just wait she will be coming right out,”

And she did. When she did she rushed across the street, gave me a big hug and said, “don’t worry ... nothing happened. I told him I am not interested and to stop trying to seduce me.”

Then when my ex-boyfriend appeared again in the street one of my other girlfriends sitting next to me telephoned him then and there to invite him to the party. “Where are you?” she asked him. He lied saying he was at work.

So we rushed back to the party and waited for him to arrive. When he did he swore that he was at work when he got the call. He said how happy he was to see me. He wanted to hug and kiss me, but I gave him a cold shoulder. When the young cousin joined the party my ex-boyfriend suddenly said he had some unfinished business at work and rushed off.



For several days afterwards when he telephoned me I told him I had jet lag, or didn't feel all that well, or was busy visiting my grandparents. I was in fact telling him the truth, even though he kept up being evasive when I asked what he has been doing.

We just talked on the phone. We did not meet up.

After several weeks of playing a game of cat and mouse I met up with my girlfriends on a Saturday night and we talked for several hours about what we should do. It was an awkward discussion we had as they told me all their stories. I was very angry!

As we got tipsy with sake we concocted a plan to teach my ex-boyfriend a lesson. I was to invite him to come with me to an onsen on Valentine's Day. We would drive up together and spend a few days there. I got him to book a room and then I drove us up to an ancient and famous onsen at the far reaches of the island, where even trains don't go. It was a long four hour drive into the middle of nowhere.

When we got there we immediately changed to go to the onsen. We changed in separate rooms and when we stepped to the onsen he wanted to get intimate with me so I let him become aroused but I stood my ground.

To tease him I let him take a picture of me using my cellphone.





Just a few minutes after we settled into the warm hot spring, six of my girlfriends, including the younger cousin, suddenly appeared and joined us.

Then I told him I needed to pee and got out.

I left him for a half hour as I dried myself, dressed and then emptied out his wallet of his identification, his money and his charge cards. I left him a note saying I do not ever want to see him again. I went out my car and waited.

For that half hour my friends took turns belittling him for being such a bad boyfriend ... and one by one they left him, starting with the young cousin.

They all quickly got dressed and dashed to my car. He sat there waiting for me to return for twenty minutes. I started the car and we waiting until he came running out of the onsen completely naked, then we sped off leaving him in the middle of nowhere with no easy way to get home.

During the long drive back home I had to block his number to stop him from calling me. As we drove back I telephoned my father and told him what had happened. He talked with my ex's father and well, the disappointment came crashing down on my ex-boyfriend. He had to telephone his father, who had to leave work early to come and drive hours and hours to pick him up and also pay his unpaid onsen bills. There was a big argument with the onsen owners over whether he had to pay. But in the end the room booking had to be paid.

My ex not only lost me, his father fired him for what he had been doing on his "grocery deliveries ..." and now my ex-boyfriend is a shelfe stalker at one of the very small supermarkets and works evenings and weekends behind the counter and well ... he doesn't have much time and energy to do much else.

As for me, I am the first person in my family to ever go to university. I am getting ready to set off to Oxford to do my Master's in Anthropology. I have an artist friend in Vancouver to thank for this – he agreed to be a living sculpture as I presented my major fourth year anthropology seminar – *Phallus Anthropologia* – the Anthropology of the Male. My Anthropology professor

was so impressed with my project that she wrote a letter of reference for me to her alma mater Oxford.

I chose to do this theme because I knew what was going on back home and I wanted to better understand the psychology and physiology of the male.

At the heart of my presentation *Phallus Anthropologia* is the modesty and fidelity that men show the women they love and admire in several cultures around the world, both ancient and modern. The thought that I put into my major fourth year anthropology seminar put my ex-boyfriend's infidelity into perspective for me.

I am looking forward to Oxford! I might stop in Vancouver for a visit on my way to the UK or on my way back just to say hello to my artist friend.

On my world travels I may decide to explore *Anthropologia Aphroditis*.

***Pictorial: A Living Tribute to Boucher***



## ***Baseball Crazy by Aki***

My father was very disappointed when I was born. My parents knew they could only afford one child and my father had hoped I would be a boy. But ... well ... what can I say? I am me!

For my first birthday my father gave me a plastic baseball and bat. My birthday cake had a baseball diamond on it. Can you guess where I am going with my story? Yes, my father is baseball crazy. He had worked hard in high school and college to make it to the Japanese major leagues as a short stop but his batting was not so hot, and in a country of short people, there are plenty of short stops to choose from. By the way I am short too, but a bit taller than both my parents. I play short stop.

As I grew up my mother hoped I would enjoy ballet and girly things. She said how beautiful I looked in a Kimono. She taught me the tea ceremony. But to the annoyance of my mother my father took to playing baseball with me any occasion he had and so I grew up as a tom boy. I wore jeans more often than dresses.

At school the girls did not see me as one of them because I was a tom boy and the boys ... well boys are boys, aren't they. They really did not like the fact that I played baseball. They liked even less that I was better at baseball than almost all of them. They bullied me on any occasion they could and most times they would not let me play with them until one day they watched me hit not one, not two, not three ... but four home runs in a game. The pitchers

were trying very hard to strike me out, but the better they threw the easier it was for me to bat their balls right out of the ball park.

Sometimes at school the boys let me pitch. I wondered why since I am not so good a pitcher? (the manga is from Sailor Fuku – I wore the same type of uniform). To find out why they let me pitch one day I pitched without panties and watched what happened! OMG the cheers! That changed everything.



Now when we played baseball the boys wanted me to play short stop for them. Then I found out some girls from my school enjoyed the fact I was so good at baseball and they would come to watch me play and put the boys in their place. Girls have better hand eye coordination than boys and faster reflexes. Hardly a game would pass that I did not hit one or two home runs.

There are a few other manga that depict girls playing baseball. I enjoyed reading them in high school. I took to wearing shorts when I played. No more dresses for me.



When I graduated from high school I went to university for two years in Japan. During those two years I was so busy that I did not have much time to do more than just watch the occasional baseball game on television.

Several of my high school friends had decided they wanted to go to Vancouver to study English so I decided to join them. We shared an apartment in Vancouver for two years. While I was in Vancouver I found the time to play some baseball games with other women. But to be honest I found playing women's baseball in Vancouver not so challenging, so one afternoon while I was hanging around a baseball field the boys were short a short stop. They



invited me play. It was that afternoon that I made my reputation when I hit four homeruns and we won our game twelve to two. I brought in eight of the runs, including one when the bases were loaded. After that I started to receive invitations to play twice and sometimes three times a week.

After I was finished my classes last December I stayed a few weeks longer in Vancouver just to play baseball. The weather was cold and wet but I managed to play seven games in eight weeks. At my last game at a baseball field in West Vancouver in March I invited a friend to come and watch me play. That final game, a game organized on my behalf by my baseball friends, was rather special because the two teams knew it would be my last game in Vancouver and so they invited me to play for both teams.

On my last game in Vancouver I played the first half of the game for one team and hit a solo home run in the third inning. Then I joined the other team and did a solo home run for them at eighth inning. In both cases I managed to rip the hide off the baseballs. They had never seen a woman rip the hide off any baseballs! I gave one of these precious balls to my Vancouver friend as a souvenir.

After the game we went to a pub and ate tacos and drank beer (we don't eat tacos in Japan but we do enjoy our beer).

I am now back in Japan and miss playing baseball with boys. Women in Japan don't play baseball and if they do they have a certain reputation! What would



you call them in Canada – a butch? But I am not a butch ... I am just a girl who likes baseball.

I know I will regret sharing this picture but you are only young once. My friend Yuki took this picture of me. I am wearing a cat's mask. Do you like my muscles?



Perhaps if I decide to get married and have a baby boy I will teach him how to play baseball. If I have a baby girl maybe it will be the tea ceremony.

What do you think?

## ***The Death of Dada by Malcolm Cowley***

### **1: A Brief History of Dada**

Tristan Tzara says that Dada was born in 1916, at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. There is some dispute about this place and date, but Tzara's word ought to be final: after all, he founded Dada. He is a Rumanian, small and graceful, who belongs to a family of formerly rich merchants; educated in France and Switzerland, he adopted French as his native tongue. It is wholly fitting that this new school of art and letters should have been founded in a cabaret, by a young man so thoroughly expatriated that he could not speak more than three words of his native language. It is fitting, too, that Dada should have transferred itself to the two banks of the Seine.

But Tzara was still in Switzerland when he wrote the Dada Manifesto in March 1918. At that time André Breton and Louis Aragon, who would later become the French leaders of the movement, were serving at the front. When these very young soldiers came home after the Armistice, they joined forces with Philippe Soupault, Paul Eluard and others to found the magazine *Littérature*, which soon became known as a Dadaist review. At the beginning of 1920 they formally invited Tzara to Paris.

That was the period of the great Dada manifestations. At a matinee on January 23 Tzara was introduced to the public. He read aloud a newspaper article, while an electric bell kept ringing so that nobody could hear what he said. A meeting was held at the Grand Palace of the Champs Elysées; several

thousand people attended it. Tzara afterward wrote in an article for *Vanity Fair* that they “manifested uproariously it is impossible to say exactly what, their joy or their disapproval, by unexpected cries and general laughter, which constituted a very pretty accompaniment to the manifestoes read by six people at once. The newspapers said that an old man in the audience gave himself up to behavior of a more or less intimate nature, that somebody set off some flashlight powder and that a pregnant woman had to be taken out.” At the *Théâtre de l’Oeuvre* two months later, twelve hundred people were turned away. “There were three spectators for every seat; it was suffocating. Enthusiastic members of the audience had brought musical instruments to interrupt us. The enemies of Dada threw down from the balconies copies of an anti-Dada paper called *Non* in which we were described as lunatics. The scandal reached proportions absolutely unimaginable.” But the scandal was even greater at the *Salle Gaveau*. “For the first time in the history of the world, people threw at us not only eggs, vegetables and pennies, but beefsteaks as well. It was a very huge success.”

Whether the public, the idiotic public, expressed its interest in terms of beefsteaks or applause, Dada was launched. It exactly suited the temper of a world disorganized by the war and ruled, so the Dadaists said, “by aggressive madmen”; now it was time for a literary movement that would outdo the politicians in lunacy. All over Europe Dadaist groups had sprung into being, and everywhere they repeated the same pattern of childishness and audacity: they played violently with art and politics and paper dollies. The Dadaists in Berlin had their own magazines, their publishing house and a Dada Club which soon brought to light great talents—Tzara believed that their many

demonstrations helped to produce the German revolution. In Cologne an allied group was permitted by the city authorities to hold a Dada exhibition in a public urinal, with free admission. By 1922 there were Dadaists in all the European capitals, even Moscow; lectures on Dadaism were being delivered at the University of Tiflis, in Soviet Georgia, before a proletarian audience. A world congress of Dadaists was held in France. But at this conference, which demonstrated the strength of the movement, there was a split in the ranks, a division between those who wished to carry Dadaism into public life and those who were content to express their disgust in practical jokes, without being bothered by the police. Friendships were broken, adherents dropped away: at the very moment when Dada seemed most successful, it was dying at the heart. Soon it was replaced by a new movement, Surrealism, which in turn was causing its scandals and enlisting its adherents. One could write, “Here lies Dada, 1916–1924.”

But the history of Dada was in reality much longer. Its existence was rendered possible by a succession of literary schools beginning before the middle of the nineteenth century. There had been the art-for-art’s-sake school of Théophile Gautier; there had been the Naturalist school (or at least the part of it which surrounded Flaubert and the Brothers Goncourt); there had been the Parnassians, the Decadents, the Symbolists; in England there had been the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the Oxford Aesthetes, the group surrounding the *Yellow Book*—then the tempo increased: there were the Post-Impressionists, the Cubists (schools of literature and schools of art were amalgamating), the Neo-Classicists, the Fantaisists; in Italy the Futurists, in England the Vorticists, in America the Imagists, in Germany the Expressionists, in Russia

the Constructivists—still the dance moved faster, so that a single artist like Picasso might successively adhere to several schools, was even expected to *changer d'école* as one might change a coat—then, at the summit of this long development, came Dada, like a last act that cast a light of farce on the preceding acts, like a capstone self-crowned with a dunce cap.

\*\*\*\*\*

Edmund Wilson was the first American critic to show that a single impulse persisted through eighty years of quarreling doctrines and self-devouring schools. In *Axel's Castle* he suggested that the name Symbolism was broad enough to cover this whole literary movement. His book was extraordinarily illuminating. Nobody before him had written a better exposition of Yeats, Joyce, Proust; and he did not confine himself to expository criticism: he placed these writers in historical perspective and considered the values that their work implied. Yet *Axel's Castle* has an obvious weakness of structure. Midway in the book, Wilson changes his conception of the subject; so that although he continues to describe it by the same name, he is really talking about two different things. In the first chapter he is discussing Symbolism primarily as a method, as “an attempt, by carefully studied means—a complicated association of ideas represented by a medley of metaphors—to communicate unique personal feelings.” But at the end of the book he is discussing Symbolism as an attitude, an ideology, in reality *a way of life* that was adopted by a whole series of writers.

This changing conception of his subject led Wilson into making two complementary mistakes. The Symbolistic method is less important than he believes it to be: its history was shorter and its influence less widespread in the world of international letters. But the *attitude toward life* which he attributes to Yeats and Valéry and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam was also that of many writers who could not in any technical sense be regarded as Symbolists. During the course of a long history, this attitude affected not only poets and novelists of different schools, but also painters, sculptors, composers, dramatists and ordinary people who confessed with bitter humility that they weren't "creative," that they were unable to "express themselves artistically." Boys of my age in Pittsburgh and Chicago had acted in a certain fashion, read certain books—they had felt themselves to be cut off from and secretly superior to the dull mass of their schoolmates—because they were influenced by what might be called the religion of art.

One example is enough to show the difference between Wilson's two conceptions of the subject. In the first chapter he explains that Symbolism was a reaction from the Naturalism of novelists like Gustave Flaubert and the cold objectivity of poets like Théophile Gautier. But later, when he describes the anti-social philosophy connected with Symbolism, we can see that Gautier was one of its founders and Flaubert perhaps its principal sage. Among the many episodes preserved in the best informal record of those times, the *Journal* of the Brothers Goncourt, there is one that seems especially significant. It shows that the religion of art very quickly expressed itself as a way of life, and one that was essentially antihuman ... Flaubert with several of his friends once visited a brothel in Rouen. On a bet, before them all, he

made love to a prostitute without removing his hat or taking the cigar from his mouth. The gesture was something more than an ugly boast. It announced a furious contempt for everything held sacred by society—as if he had said to the honest burghers of his time, “You think that life has meaning, that the act of love is holy, yet all of you together, the whole pack of lifelings, couldn’t write one passable poem or even recognize the beauty of a sentence patiently carved in marble.” It is as if he proclaimed that nothing had value in itself, that everything outside the world of art should be violently rejected. “Art is vast enough,” he wrote in one of his letters, “to occupy the whole man.”

Although such a doctrine might produce, and has in fact produced, great works of art and ingenious technical discoveries, it does so at a sacrifice. The religion of art is too dehumanized to nourish rich careers or to bring forth characters that compel our admiration. The “pure poet,” the “artist proper,” goes stumbling through life, often under a burden of neurosis. Each new artist spies out the mistakes of his predecessors and tries to guard against them by making some theoretical change. He thinks that a little more foresight will render his position secure: he sets to work deepening the moat or razing some vulnerable outwork of his ivory tower, but nevertheless it crumbles—and still newer artists rebuild the ruins according to an improved design. Always there must be changes—and there is even a moment when change itself, change for its own sake, becomes an article of doctrine.

Nor was this the only tendency implied by the religion of art as it moved inevitably toward extremes. Once the artist had come to be regarded as a being set apart from the world of ordinary men, it followed that his aloofness would

be increasingly emphasized. The world would more and more diminish in the eyes of the artist, and the artist would be self-magnified at the expense of the world. These tendencies, in turn, implied still others. Art would come to be treated as a self-sustaining entity, an essence neither produced by the world nor reacting upon it: art would be *purposeless*. No longer having to communicate with a public, it would become more opaque, difficult, *obscure*. It would be freed from all elements extraneous to itself, and particularly from logic and meaning, statistics and exhortation: it would become *pure poetry*. The independence of the artist would be asserted in always more vehement language: he would be proud, disdainful toward family duties and the laws of the tribe; he would end by assuming one of God's attributes and becoming a creator.

But this privileged function is also a limitation. The creator cannot be a copyist: he must not content himself with reproducing nature, must not utilize the creations of other artists, must not even copy his own creations. As soon as anything has been reduced to a principle—by no matter whom — it must be abandoned to the mere disciples. The “artists proper” must always prophesy, explore, lead the way into new countries of emotion; and they cannot turn back: they are confined to the frontier, to the ever-receding land beyond the boundary of the last formula. They are first authorized and then as it were condemned to go forward, to make discoveries and leave them behind, to advance in all directions, faster, faster, till their headlong charge can scarcely be distinguished from headlong retreat.



And yet these diverse tendencies, these paths continually diverging toward the four horizons, all set forth in the beginning from one easily apprehended principle. *Art is separate from life; the artist is independent of the world and superior to the lifelings.* From this principle, the hostile schools were born, and the manifestoes that canceled one another, and the wholly unintelligible poems they called forth. By this principle were guided the careers of great poets and novelists, and the ambitions toward which their careers were directed—Huysmans’ attempt to build an artificial paradise, Mallarmé’s to invent an algebra of literature, Ezra Pound’s frantic flight from his admirers, Joyce’s ambition to create a work of genius, Proust’s attempt to recapture his own past in the longest novel ever written — all these belonged to the religion of art; and even Valéry’s forsaking of art was a development out of that religion. There is a sort of law that governs such developments, at least for the lifetime of the particular culture in which they occur. The law is that no aspiration or tendency of the human mind that has once revealed itself in the culture is permitted to disappear until all the paths it suggests have been followed to the end, nor until the ends have proved futile and conflicting, nor even until the whole search has been turned to ridicule by the searchers. Seen from a perspective of years, the process is as logical as the growth of a tree; one might say that the Dada movement and its ending were both foreshadowed in the letters of Gustave Flaubert.

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Edmund Wilson believes that the Symbolist way of life leads naturally toward two extremes. “There are, as I have said, in our contemporary society, for

writers who are unable to interest themselves in it either by studying it scientifically, by attempting to reform it or by satirizing it, only two alternative courses to follow, Axel's or Rimbaud's."—He has just been describing the hero idealized in a novel by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. Lord of a lonely castle in the Black Forest, Count Axel of Auersburg is a young man with a "paleness almost radiant" and "an expression mysterious from thought." He penetrates the Rosicrucian mysteries, he discovers a vast hoard of gold and jewels, he meets a young woman who equals him in beauty, learning, pride, who begs him to enjoy with her all the world's splendors, or at least to spend with her one enraptured night—Axel refuses: he convinces her that mere living is futile, and both of them commit suicide out of pure disdain for life.

*If one chooses the first of these [Wilson continues], the way of Axel, one shuts oneself up in one's own private world, cultivating one's private fantasies, encouraging one's private manias, ultimately preferring one's absurdest chimeras to the most astonishing contemporary realities, ultimately mistaking one's chimeras for realities. If one chooses the second, the way of Rimbaud, one tries to leave the twentieth century behind—to find the good life in some country where modern manufacturing methods and modern democratic institutions do not present any problems to the artist because they haven't yet arrived.*

Here, briefly and eloquently described, are the two courses adopted by what is perhaps a majority of the "pure poets" and "artists proper." But they are not the only alternatives. There is, moreover, a serious error in Wilson's formulation of the problem. What he calls the way of Rimbaud is not the one

Rimbaud actually chose: instead it is the path followed by Paul Gauguin (or at least the path that Gauguin was described as following in *The Moon and Sixpence*, a novel enormously popular just after the war, and one that was until recently propelling the tourists of art toward Tahiti, Bali, Majorca and other islands still unspoiled by modern methods of production). It is the course generally described as that of “escape”—we have all met people who spoke of “running away” from New York, London or Paris, of “finding a refuge” from skyscrapers, cocktail parties and neuroses.

Rimbaud himself had no desire to escape into an artist’s paradise. His temperament was adventurous, aggressive, and in three brief years he had made astonishing conquests in the world of art. Now he wished to leave that world behind, either because his achievements there seemed easy and unexciting, or else because he had confused literature in general with the homosexuality of his friend Paul Verlaine and had decided that “all that” was bad. Very clear in his mind was the idea that by obstinate patience, by pure will, he could make equal conquests in the more difficult world of life. When he finally reached Abyssinia, after a dozen wild attempts, he did not sit dozing or making verses in the shade of a banyan tree: he bought coffee from the natives and sold them modern rifles. Even a gangrened leg did not keep him from making long journeys on horseback, so great was his energy, so bitter his determination. ... Rimbaud in the end was as tragically defeated by life as he had been triumphant in art. Yet his, too, was a possible course, and a heroic one, and there have been “artists proper” who tried to follow his example.

Still another extreme was that depicted by Paul Valéry in his imaginary portrait of M. Teste and his two essays on Leonardo (as indeed in his own career). He suggests that a great poet might abandon literature, not to embrace life, but in order to retreat still farther from it. Literature is regarded as something impure, tainted with action, and the “man of the greatest mind” will avoid all forms of action and, by dint of rigorous thought, will end by reducing himself to a state of practical hebetude in which he stares at his consciousness like an Oriental mystic staring at his navel. And there are other extremes to which the religion of art has led or might possibly lead. Valéry in one place speaks of “the chess game that we play with knowledge.” There happens to be a highly talented artist who abandoned painting in order to play chess. When he found that he could not become the greatest chess player in the world, he half abandoned that also, and spent his time carving bits of marble into lumps of sugar; he kept a bowl of stone-sugar on his table for the amusement of his guests. And this, too, is a possible extreme. If carried beyond a certain point, the religion of art imperceptibly merges into the irreligion of art, into a state of mind in which the artist deliberately fritters away his talents through contempt for the idiot-public that can never understand.

But what I am trying to make clear is that all these extremes—Teste’s, Rimbaud’s, Axel’s, the way of escape and the retreat into futility—existed side by side in the Dada movement. They were mingled there with an infusion of youth, vigor, Paris after the war and a not unnatural taste for novelty and scandal.

## 2: Discourse over a Grave

But what was Dada anyway? ... Not many people have seriously tried to answer this question, and the Dadaists themselves took pains to avoid it. So great was their disdain for the public, and for the idols of clarity and logic worshiped by the public in France, that they could scarcely bring themselves to offer explanations. “I am by principle against manifestoes,” said Tristan Tzara, “as I am also against principles. ... To explain is the amusement of redbellied numbskulls. **DADA HAS NO MEANING.**” And yet this meaningless movement published its manifesto, offered its explanations, and propounded its philosophy in the same breath as its hatred of philosophers. It had reached a point beyond the bounds of logic, but had reached it by a perfectly logical process. In every direction it was a carrying to extremes of the tendencies inherent in what I have called the religion of art.

It was, for example, the extreme of obscurity. That was a tendency that had been growing for half a century, and soon James Joyce would carry it to a point at which the reader was expected to master several languages, and the mythology of all races, and the geography of Dublin, in order to unravel his meaning. Gertrude Stein carried it still farther. She seemed, indeed, to be writing pure nonsense, and yet it was not quite pure: one felt uneasily that much of it could be deciphered if only one had the key. But in reading a Dada poem it was often useless to search for clues: even the poet himself might not possess them. The door of meaning was closed and double-locked; the key was thrown away.

Dada was also the extreme point reached in the long search for “absolute art” and “pure poetry.” In discussing that topic the Dada Manifesto was serious and eloquent:

*The new painter creates a world ... The new artist protests: he no longer paints (i.e. reproduces symbolically and illusionistically), but creates directly, in stone, in wood, in iron and tin, rocks and locomotive organisms that can be turned in every direction by the limpid winds of his momentary sensation. Every pictorial or plastic work is useless ... Order = disorder; ego = non-ego; affirmation = negation: all are supreme radiations of an absolute art. Absolute in the purity of cosmic and ordered chaos, eternal in the globule-second without duration, without respiration, without light, without control. . . . Art is a private matter; the artist does it for himself; any work of art that can be understood is the product of a journalist.*

Dada, in art and life, was the extreme of individualism. It denied that there was any psychic basis common to all humanity. There was no emotion shared by all men, no law to which all were subject; there was not even a sure means of communication between one man and another. Morality was a snare, “a plague produced by the intelligence.”—“Thought is a fine thing for philosophy, but it is relative. There is no final Truth.”—“Logic is a complication. Logic is always false.”—“Everything one looks at is false.” In a word, nothing is real or true except the individual pursuing his individual whims, the artist riding his hobbyhorse, his *dada*.

But the world could not be abolished merely by denying its reality. The world—and specifically the French public—remained as a hostile force to be fought, insulted or mystified. As for writers who tried to please the public, they were utterly beneath contempt: mere floor-walkers of the literary business, they did not realize that they were betraying an ideal ... This high disdain for the public and for popular writers had always been a tradition in the religion of art, but it had lately been emphasized by the revulsion that followed the war, and the Dadaists pushed it forward to extremes of anti-human feeling. The world, they said, “left in the hands of bandits, is in a state of madness, aggressive and complete madness.”—“Let each man cry: there is a great labor of destruction and negation to perform. We must sweep and clean.”—“What there is within us of the divine is the awakening of anti-human action.” So deep was their disgust that they no longer trusted in words to express it: manifestoes must give place to manifestations and poems to deeds, to “significant gestures.” Thus, “I proclaim the opposition of all the cosmic faculties to this gonorrhea of a putrid sun produced by the factories of philosophic thought; I proclaim a pitiless struggle with all the weapons of Dadaist Disgust. Every product of disgust capable of becoming a negation of the family is dada; to protest with all the fists of one’s being in destructive action: DADA.”

In passages like this it is impossible not to recognize the presence of the crusading spirit. Dada, though it despised morality, was animated by moral fervor—and in this respect also it was the extreme of a long process. For nearly a century artists had been fighting against the necessity of making their works conform to the laws of the tribe. They had adapted from various

German Romantic philosophers the principle that aesthetics was entirely separate from ethics—"Art has nothing to do with morality." As a result of famous trials involving the censorship of novels and pictures, they had succeeded in having this principle partly admitted by the courts and wholly accepted by a portion of the public. Then, having won this victory, they began to proclaim that the laws of aesthetics were superior to the moral laws enforced by Church and State. But the Dadaists went farther: they went to the point of believing that public morality ought to be abolished. The only laws that the artist should be forced to observe were private ones, the laws of art. Those laws, however, applied not only to his books or paintings: they also should govern his career and his judgments of the world. To be adventurous—to explore and discover in life as in art—was the Categorical Imperative. Actions like pictures should be dada. "The good life," if it was ever achieved, would be surprising, novel, picturesque, purposeless, abstract, incomprehensible to the public—it would merit all the adjectives that applied to a Dadaist masterpiece.

But there was one other tendency that helps to explain the otherwise inexplicable works of art produced by the Dada movement. Those who took part in it were not only guided by a rigorous code of morals or anti-morals: they were also buoyed up by a feeling of liberty, which again was carried to the extreme. They believed that the new artist had freed himself from the limitations of the old artistic mediums. He was no longer confined to paint or words or marble: he was at liberty to utilize any methods or materials that might strike his fancy. He might, for example, make an arrangement of watch springs, ball bearings and kitchen matches, and photograph it (like Man Ray);



he might clip illustrations out of old mail-order catalogues, shuffle them into an ingenious design and exhibit them as a painting (like Max Ernst, who later sold such pictures at a stiff price); he might devote himself to sculptures modeled from sealing wax and pipe cleaners (like Hidalgo); he might have his poems printed in the typography of advertisements for nerve tonics and cancer cures (like Tristan Tzara), or invent a new system of punctuation (like e. e. cummings); he might even forsake all forms of plastic or verbal art and apply the same principles of self-expression to business, politics or, if he chose, to practical joking. Nobody in any case had the right to criticize.

It veritably seemed that Dada was opening a whole new world to writers. They had felt vaguely that everything was said, everything written, that all the great subjects of poetry and fiction had been seized upon by others, exploited and rendered unusable. Now they could take heart again. Here were new subjects waiting to be described, machinery, massacre, skyscrapers, urinals, sexual orgies, revolution—for Dada nothing could be too commonplace or novel, too cruel or shocking, to be celebrated by the writer in his own fashion. Or he might, if the notion struck him, desert the subject entirely—he might enter the stage of his drama and sweep all his puppets into the corner; or again he was privileged to disregard the limits of possibility—if he was writing a novel about modern Paris, he need not hesitate to introduce a tribe of Redskins, an octopus, a unicorn, Napoleon or the Virgin Mary. It suddenly seemed that all the writers of the past had been enslaved by reality: they had been limited to the task of copying the world, whereas the new writer could disregard it and create a world of his own in which he was master. He was at last free! ... He was at liberty to indulge his whims, to marshal his characters and lead them

ahead like an Alexander marching into unknown countries. But in practice his freedom proved illusory, his creations were inhuman, were monsters that never came to life. He could at best lead an army of ghosts into a kingdom of shadows.

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Nobody can read about the Dada movement without being impressed by the absurd and half-tragic disproportion between its rich, complicated background and its poor achievements. Here was a group of young men, probably the most talented in Europe: there was not one of them who lacked the ability to become a good writer or, if he so decided, a very popular writer. They had behind them the long traditions of French literature (and knew them perfectly); they had the examples of living masters (and had pondered them); they had a burning love of their art and a fury to excel. And what, after all, did they accomplish? ... They wrote a few interesting books, influenced a few others, launched and inspired half a dozen good artists, created scandals and gossip, had a good time. Nobody can help wondering why, in spite of their ability and moral fervor and battles over principle, they did nothing more.

Always Dada was bustling into action. There were the early meetings already described, the chief purpose of which was to mystify and insult the public; there was the later demonstration in a churchyard against religion (it rained and nobody listened to the speakers); there was the Dada trial of Maurice Barrès, which called forth angry headlines in all the daily papers; there were theatrical performances like one I attended that was given for the benefit of

Tristan Tzara, in this case ending with fights on the stage and the police called in. Years later there was the famous incident of Louis Aragon and *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*—he promised that if his name was once more mentioned in the paper, he would wreck the editorial offices; his name was mentioned; the offices were wrecked. After that Aragon threatened to give a beating to any critic who reviewed his new book, which incidentally was a good one. No critic dared to review it—and what then? The Dada manifestations were ineffectual in spite of their violence, because they were directed against no social class and supported by no social class. All their significant gestures were gestures in the air.

There were Dadaists who spent weeks or months in polishing and consciously perfecting a few lines of verse; those were the ones who most fervently praised the Subconscious. Others abused criticism and the critics in majestic essays that abounded in the keenest sort of critical observations. Still others devoted themselves to automatic writing and published the results of their experiments without, so they said, changing a word of it. There were many who deliberately cultivated the fine art of always being in bad taste. For a time it was also the fashion to be very busy à l'Américaine: I remember the example of a Dadaist who simultaneously wrote novels, conducted four love affairs and a marriage, plunged into the wildest business ventures—he spent the next year recuperating in a sanitarium. I believe there was one who set sail for Tahiti, following in Gauguin's footsteps; another took ship for Rio de Janeiro. One very talented poet wrote nothing but postcards to his friends. There was a Dadaist who collected paper matches: he had the largest collection of them in the world. He was a very ingenious and elegant young man and determined

to seek his fortune in America. Having borrowed his passage money, he landed in New York with a boiled shirt and two suitcases filled with letters of introduction. He presented some of the letters, tried bootlegging for a while, found the profession overcrowded, collected comic strips from the Hearst newspapers, married an American wife, took drugs, committed suicide—he was Jacques Rigaut, and after his death he became a sort of Dada saint. I am confusing my dates: in reality Jacques lived long enough to become a Surrealist saint, but the two schools had so many doctrines and members in common that they are often hard to distinguish. Shortly before he died, a whole squad of former Dadaists announced that they were abandoning poetry for communism, and were very serious about it, but not quite serious enough to be accepted by the Communist Party, which suspected that they might soon veer off in a different direction. A very few of them long afterwards became Communists in earnest; that is a different story. Mostly, while waiting for the revolution, for any revolution, it didn't matter, they spent their time in quarreling with one another.

But the interesting feature of the quarrels is precisely that they could not have been avoided: they were conflicts of principle inherent in the movement from the first. I have said that the Dadaists were animated by fierce moral convictions. They believed that life should be rash and adventurous, that literature should be freed from all impure motives, and especially from the commercial motive—thus, writing an article for a commercial magazine (like Tzara's piece for *Vanity Fair*, from which I quoted) was almost a sin against the Holy Ghost. But in practice they could not do what they preached. They did not live in a free society, nor did they belong among the rulers of the

society that exists. For the most part they were poor young men of middle-class families with their way to make. They sooner or later had to betray their high principles; not many of them chose to starve. The uncompromising ones abused and excoriated the others — and then were forced to compromise in turn, and be excoriated. Dada began to split into smaller and smaller fractions. One of these, the largest that remained, issued the Surrealist Manifesto, became famous for a while, gained many adherents, but the process of fractioning continued — after a few years almost the only writers of talent left in the movement were Louis Aragon, who had been the most active and brilliant of the Dadaists, and André Breton, the most forceful in character. The two had been friends since childhood, but in the end they quarreled like the others, on a matter of principle. One might say that Dada died by principle: it committed suicide.

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As for the religion of art, that broader tendency of which Dada was the extreme manifestation, it seemed to be growing more popular even while Dada was dying. It was gaining more adherents every year. Its foremost writers, its saints, were not widely read, since their books were too difficult for the public; but they exerted a wide influence and enjoyed a tremendous underground prestige.

Edmund Wilson explains that the postwar reputation of writers in this tradition “was due largely to extra-literary accidents”:

*When the prodigious concerted efforts of the war ended only in impoverishment and exhaustion for all the European peoples concerned, and in a general feeling of hopelessness about politics . . . the Western mind became peculiarly hospitable to a literature indifferent to action and unconcerned with the group. Many of the socially minded writers, besides, had been intellectually demoralized by the war and had irreparably lost credit in consequence; whereas these others—Yeats, Valéry, Joyce, Proust—had maintained an unassailable integrity.*

It ought to be added that the intellectual world of the 1920s was repeating an old pattern. The art-for-art's-sake tradition had first been established in the middle of the nineteenth century, at a time when the intellectual atmosphere of France was not unlike that prevailing in postwar Europe. Many French writers had become emotionally or physically involved in the Revolution of 1848—Baudelaire, for example, fought on the workingmen's side of the barricades—and when the Revolution was defeated, some of them lost faith in social causes and began to seek in art the ideals they no longer hoped to see realized in life. Rimbaud and others had the same experience in 1871, during and after the Paris Commune: the great poet of individualism at one time tried to draw up an ideal constitution for a socialist state. After the war of 1914 and the betrayal at Versailles, the process was repeated more rapidly on an international scale.

And there was another reason, too, for the popularity at that time of a literature hostile to society. The religion of art is not at all a poor man's religion: a

degree of economic freedom is essential to those embarking on a search for aesthetic absolutes. In the decade before 1930 more writers and painters than ever before, and especially more Americans, had leisure to meditate the problems of art and the self, to express themselves, to be creative. And the artists were now surrounded by a cultured mob of dilettantes, people without convictions of their own who fed upon them emotionally, adopted their beliefs and encouraged their vices. In a world where everybody felt lost and directionless, the artists were forced often in spite of themselves to become priests.

Yet the religion of art was approaching its end. For nearly a century now it had played an important role in literature, first in France, then in all the Western world. It had inspired men of talent wholly to consecrate themselves, to produce great works at a sacrifice and to refine the methods of poetry and fiction—even to embark on a search for the absolute that threatened to carry them beyond the frontiers of art. The search had been continued more frantically by their successors. After Dada, however, it became evident that all the diverging paths had been followed to the end, which was always the same—each path seemed to lead toward an infinitely bustling futility, a dance of fireflies in the twilight. After Dada, the historical role of the movement was completed and only the busy ghost of it was left. And so when Dada died it did not perish alone. This fact is enough to explain its importance. In a sense, the whole religion of art died with it and was buried in the same grave.

### **3: Case Record**

But Dada still was strenuously alive in the winter and spring of 1923, when I was learning to know the movement at first hand. The quarrels by which it was already divided did not seem to be fatal ones. Its adherents had begun to look back a little wistfully toward the days of the great early manifestations—when, as Aragon said more than once, they were too busy and excited even to sleep with their mistresses—but they also looked forward to a future still busier and more significant.

I was now seeing the Dadaists often, both factions of them, not only on my Wednesdays in Paris but also during the long weeks in Giverny. Aragon spent two months there, working on his new book: in the afternoons we tramped through the meadows fresh with primroses and English daisies while he recited poems from memory hour after hour or expounded his theories of writing. Often on week-ends Tzara came to visit us with a very pretty American girl who smoked sixty cigarettes a day to the great profit of the French government tobacco monopoly, while Tzara made puns, invented games and innocently changed the rules for fear of losing. And sometimes, but not when Tzara was there, all of André Breton's friends arrived on Sundays, a whole performing troupe of Dadaists with their mistresses or wives, or both. They were very serious, angry young men, on principle, but they laughed a great deal and enjoyed themselves and it would have been hard not to like them.

I didn't regard myself as one of the Dadaists. I tried to judge them dispassionately and take no part in their quarrels; I was a foreigner after all and would soon be returning to my own country. Still, I could not help



absorbing their notions of literary conduct, as if from the atmosphere. One evening when my wife was away, Dos Passos and Cummings came down from Paris. With Aragon we went to a restaurant and had a gay dinner with several bottles of wine; then we returned to my studio over the blacksmith shop. I made a speech against book fetishism. The burden of it was that wherever I lived books seemed to accumulate; some were bought, some were gifts, some came by mail and others appeared one didn't know how; they moved in like relatives and soon the house was crowded. I sympathized with De Quincey, who used to rent a room, wait until it was full of books and then move away, leaving the books behind him. Here in France my American books couldn't be sold and nobody wanted them as presents, yet I felt an unreasoning and almost Chinese respect for the printed word that kept me from destroying them. We all had that weakness and should take violent steps to overcome it ... I went over to the shelves and pulled down an assortment of bad review books and French university texts that I wouldn't need again. After tearing some of them apart I piled them all on the asbestos mat in front of the stove; then I put a match to the pile. It was a gesture in the Dada manner, but not a successful one, for the books merely smoldered. We talked about bad writers while the smoke grew thicker; then Cummings proved that he was a better Dadaist—at least in someone else's studio—by walking over and urinating on the fire.

Jack Wheelwright arrived for a longer visit, with a lot of expensive luggage. Jack, whose father had been the architect of the Lampoon building in Cambridge, had already achieved a distinction of his own: he was the only student ever expelled from Harvard for misspelling a word. The word was

“nausea” and he shouldn’t have used it when he was in a fix already. After a series of minor misdeeds Jack had been put on probation for simply forgetting to take the final examination in one of his courses. Students on probation had to attend all their classes or offer an excuse that was convincing to the dean, who was hard to convince. Jack missed a class and then appeared in the dean’s office with his excuse in writing: “I was absent yesterday from English 14”—or whatever the course was—“because I had acute nausea after seeing the moving picture, *Broken Blossoms*.” He had been sent home to the family house in Back Bay. Now he appeared at Giverny with a sheaf of his own poems, full of fresh images and original spellings, and another sheaf of manuscripts that Gorham Munson had assembled for the next two issues of *Secession*; Jack was to have them printed in Italy, where prices at the time were even lower than in Vienna. I wondered what the issues would look like after being set in type by Italian printers who couldn’t speak English and then proofread by the worst speller who ever failed to graduate from Harvard (though he might have run a dead heat in a spelling bee with F. Scott Fitzgerald of Princeton). I felt like sending a cable to Munson: “Make Jack submit proof,” but then I reflected that if he didn’t send proof the result would at least be arbitrary, surprising and utterly *dada*.

Reading over the letters I wrote that spring and early summer, and the entries in my notebook, I can see the extent to which my thinking had been influenced by my new friends. “The famous two years are ending,” I told Kenneth Burke on July 5, in my last letter from Normandy, “with little accomplished and much learned. Yet it seems to me that their value was not so much the knowledge of books and writing they helped me to acquire as the aid they

gave me in reaching a personal philosophy.” I was using a big word. My philosophy was really an attitude, or at best a collection of beliefs, some of them evolved by myself and others merely adapted from my French friends. Let us try to set them down as a case record.

I believed, first of all, that the only respectable ambition for a man of letters was to be a man of letters—not exclusively a novelist, an essayist, a dramatist, but rather one who adopts the whole of literature as his province, “who devotes himself to literature,” I wrote with fervor, “as one might devote a life to God or the Poor.”

I believed that the man of letters, while retaining his own point of view, which was primarily that of the poet, should concern himself with every department of human activity, including science, sociology and revolution.

I believed that more writers were ruined by early success than by the lack of it, and was therefore willing to make a fool of myself in order to avoid being successful.

I was violently opposed to what I called “the fallacy of contraction.” “Writers,” I observed in my notebook, “often speak of ‘saving their energy,’ as if each man were given a nickel’s worth of it, which he is at liberty to spend—one cent on Love, one cent on Livelihood, two cents on Art or other wasteful activities, and the remainder on a big red apple ... To me, the mind of a poet resembles Fortunatus’s purse: the more spent, the more it supplies.

“There are many writers who deliberately contract the circle of their interests. They refuse to participate in the public life of their time, or even in the discussion of social questions. They avoid general ideas, are ‘bored’ by this, ‘not concerned’ with that. They confine themselves to literary matters — in the end, to literary gossip. And they neglect the work of expanding the human mind to its extremest limits of thought and feeling — which, as I take it, is the aim of literature.”

I was grandiloquent in those days; I was also highly moral, but in a fashion acquired from my Dada friends. A writer could steal, murder, drink or be sober, lie to his friends or with their wives: all this, I said, was none of my concern; but my tolerance did not extend to his writing, from which I demanded high courage, absolute integrity and a sort of intelligence that was in itself a moral quality. And I was romantic, too, in the strict sense of the word. After a period of admiring French classicism, I had taken to reading and praising the writers of the Romantic era, from Monk Lewis and Byron to Gérard de Nerval and Pétrus Borel. At the same time I was interested in applying their methods to new material drawn from the age of technology and high-pressure selling. I was determined to be humorless, having developed a furious contempt for “those beaten people who regard their own weakness with a deprecatory smile.” And I had catchwords that reappeared in everything I wrote: “disinterestedness,” “indiscretion” (I considered it a high virtue), “disdain,” “significant” or “arbitrary gestures,” “violence,” “manifestoes,” “courage.”

My letters were filled with impractical projects:

“Yesterday, Kenneth,” I wrote on June 29, “it struck me with the force of revelation that the time has come for us to write some political manifestoes. We are not critics or short-story writers; we are poets: in other words, we are interested in every form of human activity. To be ticketed and dismissed as such-and-such a sort of writer gives me a pain behind the ears. Also, I am eaten with the desire to do something significant and indiscreet. An Open Letter to President Harding. An Open Letter to the Postmaster General on the Censorship, in which I admit the right to censor, point out how dangerous my opinions are, even in book reviews, and demand why I am not suppressed. And other manifestations: for example, a call to voters to cease voting, an attack on the liberals, an attack on the Socialists and Communists. Imagine all these documents appearing together in a political issue of Broom. What a stink. But the stink would mean something. In a country as hypocritical as the United States, merely to enumerate the number of laws one has broken would be a significant gesture. And if all the literary forces of law and order rose up against us, we could always retire to farming or reading proofs. Think it over. The step is not to be taken tomorrow. And I have the feeling, Kenneth, that some such courageous and indiscreet step is required of us, if we are not going to resign ourselves to petty literary wars with Ezra Pound, Robert McAlmon, even Floyd Dell.”

And so I was planning to carry literary ideals into the political world; I was contemplating a crusade and was prepared to be one of the leaders. But I was also a disciple: for the first and last time in my life I admitted to having a master.

“I have been intending to write you a letter about Louis Aragon,” I said on June 4, “for his is a character which demands a long explanation ... Imagine this elegant young man, from a family whose social position is above reproach: a young man so gifted that the word ‘genius’ must have been applied to him ever since he was four years old and wrote his first novel. A brilliant career stretches in front of him. He has read everything and mastered it. Suddenly, at a given age, he rejects his family and social connections and, with a splendid disdain acquired from his early successes, begins to tell everybody exactly what he thinks. And he continues to be successful. He has so much charm, when he wishes to use it, that it takes him years to make an enemy; but by force of repeated insults he succeeds in this aim also. He retains all that hatred of compromise which is the attribute of youth—and of a type of youth we never wholly possessed. He disapproves of *La Nouvelle Revue Française*; therefore he refuses to write for it, although all other channels of publication are closed to him already.

“He lives literature. If I told him that a poem of Baudelaire’s was badly written, he would be capable of slapping my face. He judges a writer largely by his moral qualities, such as courage, vigor of feeling, the refusal to compromise. He proclaims himself a romantic. In practice this means that his attitude toward women is abominable: he is either reciting poetry, which soon ceases to interest them, or trying to sleep with them, which they say becomes equally monotonous. He is always seriously in love; he never philanders. Often he is a terrible bore. He is an egoist and vain, but faithful to his friends ... I have met other people whose work is interesting, but Aragon is the only

one to impose himself by force of character. I ought to add that he has a doglike affection for André Breton.

“My apologies for this long digression, but I think it will explain a good deal.” Aragon, indeed, was affecting me more than I liked to admit. Under his influence I was becoming a Dadaist in spite of myself, was adopting many of the Dada standards, and was even preparing to put them into action.

#### **4: Significant Gesture**

During the last three weeks before sailing for America, I wrote no letters. I was much too excited to write letters; I had never, in fact, spent prouder, busier or more amusing days. I was being arrested and tried for punching a café proprietor in the jaw.

He deserved to be punched, though not especially by me; I had no personal grudge against him. His café, the Rotonde, had long been patronized by revolutionists of every nation. Lenin used to sit there, I was told; and proletarian revolts were still being planned, over coffee in the evening, by quiet men who paid no attention to the hilarious arguments of Swedish and Rumanian artists at the surrounding tables. The proprietor— whose name I forget—used to listen unobtrusively. It was believed, on more or less convincing evidence, that he was a paid informer. It was said that he had betrayed several anarchists to the French police. Moreover, it was known that he had insulted American girls, treating them with the cold brutality that

French café proprietors reserve for prostitutes. He was a thoroughly disagreeable character and should, we felt, be called to account.

We were at the Dôme, ten or twelve of us packed together at a table in the midst of the crowd that swirled in the Boulevard Montparnasse. It was July 14, 1923, the national holiday. Chinese lanterns hung in rows among the trees; bands played at every corner; everywhere people were dancing in the streets. Paris, deserted for the summer by its aristocrats, bankers and politicians, forgetting its hordes of tourists, was given over to a vast plebeian carnival, a general madness in which we had eagerly joined. Now, tired of dancing, we sipped our drinks and talked in loud voices to make ourselves heard above the music, the rattle of saucers, the shuffle of feet along the sidewalk. I was trying, with my two hands on the table, to imitate the ridiculous efforts of Tristan Tzara to hop a moving train. “Let’s go over,” said Laurence Vail, tossing back his long yellow hair from his forehead, “and assault the proprietor of the Rotonde.”

“Let’s,” I said.

We crossed the street together, some of the girls in bright evening gowns and some in tweeds, Louis Aragon slim and dignified in a dinner jacket, Laurence bareheaded and wearing a raincoat which he never removed in the course of the hot starlit night, myself coatless, dressed in a workman’s blue shirt, worn trousers and rope-soled shoes. Delayed and separated by the crowd on the pavement, we made our way singly into the bar, which I was the last to enter. Aragon, in periodic sentences pronounced in a beautifully modulated voice,



was expressing his opinion of all stool pigeons — *mouchards* — and was asking why such a wholly contemptible character as the proprietor of the Rotonde presumed to solicit the patronage of respectable people. The waiters, smelling a fight, were forming a wall of shirt fronts around their employer. Laurence Vail pushed through the wall; he made an angry speech in such rapid French that I could catch only a few phrases, all of them insults. The proprietor backed away; his eyes shifted uneasily; his face was a dirty white behind his black mustache. Harold Loeb, looking on, was a pair of spectacles, a chin, a jutting pipe and an embarrassed smile.

I was angry at my friends, who were allowing the situation to resolve into a series of useless gestures; but even more I was seized with a physical revulsion for the proprietor, with his look of a dog caught stealing chickens and trying to sneak off. Pushing past the waiters, I struck him a glancing blow in the jaw. Then, before I could strike again, I was caught up in an excited crowd and forced to the door.

Five minutes later our band had once more assembled on the terrace of the Dôme. I had forgotten the affair already: nothing remained but a vague exhilaration and the desire for further activity. I was obsessed with the idea that we should changer de quartier: that instead of spending the rest of the night in Montparnasse, we should visit other sections of Paris. Though no one else seemed enthusiastic, I managed by force of argument to assemble five hesitant couples, and the ten of us went strolling southeastward along the Boulevard Montparnasse.

On reaching the first café we stopped for a drink of beer and a waltz under the chestnut trees. One couple decided to return to the Dôme. Eight of us walked on to another café, where, after a bock, two other couples became deserters. “Let’s change our quarter,” I said once more. At the next café, Bob Coates consulted his companion. “We’re going back to the Dôme,” he said. Two of us walked on sadly. We caught sight of Montrouge — more Chinese lanterns and wailing accordions and workmen dancing with shopgirls in the streets — then we too returned to Montparnasse.

It was long after midnight, but the streets were as crowded as before and I was eager for adventure. At the Dôme I met Tristan Tzara, seized him by the arm and insisted that we go for a stroll. We argued the question whether the Dada movement could be revived. Under the chestnut trees we met a high-brown woman dressed in barbaric clothes; she was thought to be a princess from Senegal. I addressed her extravagant compliments in English and French; Tzara added others in French, German and his three words of Rumanian. “Go ’way, white boys,” she said in a Harlem voice. We turned back, passing the crowded terrace of the Rotonde. The proprietor was standing there with his arms folded. At the sight of him a fresh rage surged over me.

“*Quel salaud!*” I roared for the benefit of his six hundred customers. “*Ah, quel petit mouchard!*”

Then we crossed the street once more toward the Dôme, slowly. But when I reached the middle of the tracks I felt each of my arms seized by a little blue policeman. “Come along with us,” they said. And they marched me toward

the station house, while Tzara rushed off to get the identification papers left behind in my coat. The crowds disappeared behind us; we were alone—I and the two flics and the proprietor of the Rotonde.

One of the two policemen was determined to amuse himself. “You’re lucky,” he said, “to be arrested in Paris. If you were arrested by those brutal policemen of New York, they would cuff you on the ear—like this,” he snarled, cuffing me on the ear, “but in Paris we pat you gently on the shoulder.”

I knew I was in trouble. I said nothing and walked peacefully beside him.

“Ah, the police of Paris are incomparably gentle. If you were arrested in New York, they would crack you in the jaw—like this,” he said, cracking me in the jaw, “but here we do nothing; we take you with us calmly.”

He rubbed his hands, then thrust his face toward mine. His breath stank of brandy.

“You like the police of Paris, *hein?*”

“Assuredly,” I answered. The proprietor of the Rotonde walked on beside us, letting his red tongue play over the ends of his mustache. The other flic said nothing.

“I won’t punch you in the nose like the New York policemen,” said the drunken man, punching me in the nose. “I will merely ask you to walk on in front of me ... Walk in front of me, pig!”

I walked in front of him, looking back suspiciously under my armpit. His hand was on his holster, loosening the flap. I had read about people shot “while trying to escape” and began walking so very slowly that he had to kick me in the heels to urge me up the steps of the police station. When we stood at the desk before the sergeant, he charged me with an unprovoked assault on the proprietor of the Rotonde—and also with forcibly resisting an officer. “Why,” he said, “he kicked me in the shins, leaving a scar. Look here!”

He rolled up his trouser leg, showing a scratch half an inch long. It was useless for me to object that my rope-soled shoes wouldn’t have scratched a baby. Police courts in France, like police courts everywhere, operate on the theory that a policeman’s word is always to be taken against that of an accused criminal.

Things looked black for me until my friends arrived—Laurence and Louis and Jacques Rigaut and my wife—bearing with them my identification papers and a supply of money. Consulting together, we agreed that the drunken policeman must be bribed, and bribed he was: in the general confusion he was bribed twice over. He received in all a hundred and thirty francs, at least four times as much as was necessary. Standing pigeon-toed before the sergeant at the desk and wearing an air of bashful benevolence, he announced that I was

a pretty good fellow after all, even though I had kicked him in the shins. He wished to withdraw the charge of resisting an officer.

My prospects brightened perceptibly. Everyone agreed that the false charge was the more serious of the two. For merely punching a stoolpigeon, the heaviest sentence I could receive would be a month in jail. Perhaps I would escape with a week.

A preliminary hearing was held on the following evening, after a night in jail and a day spent vainly trying to sleep between visits from the police and telephone calls from anxious friends. I stopped at the Dôme to collect my witnesses; fortunately there was a party that evening and they were easy to find. They consisted of nine young ladies in evening gowns. None of them had been present at the scene in the Rotonde the night before, but that didn't matter: all of them testified in halting French that I hadn't been present either; the whole affair was an imposition on a writer known for his serious character; it was a hoax invented by a café proprietor who was a pig and very impolite to American young women.

The examining magistrate was impressed. He confided later to André Salmon that the proprietor of the Rotonde had only his waiters to support the story he told, whereas I had nine witnesses, all of them very respectable people, *des gens très bien*. That helped Salmon to get me out of the scrape, although he also brought his own influence to bear. He was a poet and novelist who was also a star reporter and covered all the important murder trials for *Le Matin*.

Since magistrates liked to be on good terms with him, he managed to have my trial postponed from day to day and finally abandoned.

But the most amusing feature of the affair, and my justification for dealing with it at length, was the effect it produced on my French acquaintances. They looked at me with an admiration I could not understand, even when I reflected that French writers rarely came to blows and that they placed a high value on my unusual action. Years later I realized that by punching a café proprietor in the jaw I had performed an act to which all their favorite catchwords could be applied. First of all, I had acted for reasons of public morality; bearing no private grudge against my victim, I had been *disinterested*. I had committed an *indiscretion*, acted with *violence* and *disdain* for the law, performed an *arbitrary* and *significant gesture*, uttered a *manifesto*; in their opinion I had shown courage ... For the first time in my life I became a public character. I was entertained at dinners and cocktail parties, interviewed for the newspapers, asked to contribute to reviews published by the Dadaists in Amsterdam, Brussels, Lyon and Belgrade. My stories were translated into Hungarian and German. A party of Russian writers then visiting Paris returned to Moscow with several of my poems, to be printed in their own magazines.

The poems were not at all revolutionary in tone, but they dealt with a subject that, in those briefly liberal days of the New Economic Policy in Russia, had been arousing the enthusiasm of Soviet writers. They were poems about America, poems that spoke of movies and skyscrapers and machines, dwelling upon them with all the nostalgia derived from two long years of exile. I, too, was enthusiastic over America; I had learned from a distance to admire its

picturesque qualities. And I was returning to New York with a set of values that bore no relation to American life, with convictions that could not fail to be misunderstood in a country where Dada was hardly a name, and moral judgments on literary matters were thought to be in questionable taste—in a city where writers had only three justifications for their acts: they did them to make money, or to get their name in the papers, or because they were drunk.

## ***My Power over Boys by Gisele R***

I was twelve when I had my first amorous encounter. That was the year I discovered that as a girl I had power over boys. That was also the year I stumbled into the sex thing not really knowing much about it, and what lay ahead.

I have a brother a little over two years older than me. It was during his fourteenth birthday party in 1975 that he had invited a school friend, Phillip, to come for a film and dinner. The film was *The Return of the Pink Panther*. We went to see the film at a movie theater. My parents had come too and my mother wanted me to sit next to her “just in case the film was too scary.” She and my father sat at the far end of the row, but I felt brave and adventurous. I sat second seat from the end near the aisle, between my brother at my left and Phillip at my right. \my brother wanted me to sit at the end of the row but just before the film started Phillip offered me his seat and we swapped. My brother was not happy that I was sitting next to him.

Yes, there were some scenes in the film that were a bit scary, including the very beginning of the film when the thief stole the Pink Panther Diamond and they started to shoot at the thief. When I took fright I tried to grab hold of my brother’s hand but he pushed my hand away. “Stop being such a baby,” he hissed at me. So I took hold of Phillip’s hand and he let me. Out of the corner of my eye I saw that he was holding onto both arms of his seat and so I figured he found this part of the film a bit exciting too.



Unconsciously I squeezed tight on his hand. Then I heard him whisper into my ear “don’t be scared ... its only make-believe.” I turned my eyes to look at him and noticed a shadow in the front of his pants that had not been there a few minutes ago. Several times during the film when scary bits happened he let me grab onto his hand and squeeze and several times the shadow reappeared. I don’t think he knew I noticed this or if he did he did not mind I knew.

About half way through the film I felt a wetness between my legs. It was odd because I did not think I was trickling pee. It seemed a different wetness which started when Phillip let me hold his hand. So I had to get up and go to the washroom. I asked my brother to come with me, but he said no, so I got up and was about to go by myself when Phillip stood up to let me pass and then whispered “I will come with you.” So we both ventured into the lobby to the washrooms.

There was three of them. A girl’s, a boys’s and a family bathroom. I suddenly had the courage to grab Phillip’s hand and say “let’s go together into the family one.”

He smiled and said, “no ... you go ahead ... I will wait for you outside.”

“Don’t you have to go too?” I asked him.

“No ... I just figured you shouldn’t go to the washrooms all alone.”

So I went into the family bathroom and closed the door behind me but I did not lock it. I drew up my dress and opened the front of my panties and looked down. I tried to figure what was going on. My panties were wet but not in the front where I pee but at a place where I had never been wet before. The wetness didn't look or smell like pee, but like something very different. For a few seconds I just stared.

Then there was a knock at the door and my mother's voice. "Are you ok dear?" I put myself in order and then opened the door. There was my mother standing next to Phillip. I felt very self-conscious. My mother took charge. "Thanks for looking after Gisele. You're missing the film, why don't you go back?"

"Ok," he said and then smiled at me and walked back into the theater.

Mothers have a sixth sense about their children and I guess the worried look on my face told her something was on my mind. So she stepped into the bathroom and locked the door behind her. It took an awkward few seconds before I could explain to her what was going on. She smiled knowingly and said "that's natural. It happened when girls get excited. It's called gushing. It must be the film. Maybe we should just wait in the lobby until the film is over?"

I shook my head and blushed. My mother gave me a reassuring hug and continued ..."I guess it is almost time for me to explain the bird and the bees to you."

She looked into my eyes and then gave me a second hug. “Do you want to sit next to me?”

I now felt a frisson. “No ...” I shook my head vehemently. My pony tails swayed back and forth hitting me on the side of my face. “I will go back to my own seat.”

My mother chuckled. “You are not my little girl anymore, are you?”

I felt all warm on the inside and crossed my hands over the front of my dress. “Let’s go back then.” And so we did.

It took me only a few minutes for me to realize it was not the film that was making me gush but Phillip, for every time he let me hold his hand I felt my wetness time and time and time again.

Something was happening to him as well. When the film was over and we got up to leave Phillip kept his hands clasp in front of himself until he could put on his winter coat. It was a cold November day and snow was already on the ground. As we walked to the car my brother and Phillip started to talk about the film and I was pleasantly surprised when my brother’s friend asked me what I thought about the *The Return of the Pink Panther*.

I responded that “I like the fact that the thief at the beginning of the film was a girl.”

“You would,” my brother quipped, “for you it is all about girl stuff” trying to cut me down in size, but his friend said “that was a pleasant surprise. Sort of like *To Catch a Thief*.” It was just the right thing to say to not anger my brother while coming to my defence. He didn’t take sides but treated me as an equal.

“What film is that?” I wanted to pull Phillip away from my brother, for a few minutes at least. It worked!

“It’s a film from the 1950’s starring Cary Grant. Cary Grant is one of my favorite actors ... ”

I was about to ask him to tell more but we had gotten to the car and my father commanded “get in everyone.” We had to fight the traffic jam in the parking lot, then get onto a busy street before we could to drive the ten minutes to the restaurant. Once again I sat between my brother and his friend, this time in the back seat of our family car. My brother all but ignored me as he talked with his friend, but Phillip seemed to enjoy having me there for he didn’t mind that I pressed my right leg against his left one, or put my right foot next to his foot. I could not help but notice that he had both hands on his lap during the twenty minute drive to my parent’s favorite French Restaurant, *Michel’s*.

The whole drama of dinner was about to begin. When we got to *Michel’s* I wanted to once again sit between my brother and his friend but my brother said “stop being such a pest!”, so I sat on the right of Phillip, with my mother at my right. The waiter brought us the menus and everyone went ahead and

ordered their *usual* but Phillip had never been to *Michel's* and didn't know what to order. But he also didn't want to hold everyone up.

There was a kindness and politeness to Phillip that I did not see in my brother Raymond. My brother's foibles had made me begin to wonder whether boys are just too different to girls to get along. But I knew they could because most of the time my parents got along. They did argue from time to time, but not too often.

I was surprised when Phillip turned to me and asked "Gisele, what would you recommend I have for dinner?" My head was swimming and the wetness between my legs more noticeable. No one had ever asked me something like this before.

My brother got angry and said to Phillip "I am having the *boeuf au poivre*." Almost like he was commanding his friend to have the same.

"Oh, I imagine it is a good main course, but *boeuf au poivre* is a bit too spicy for my stomach. I am allergic to many things."

Oh my, I thought to myself, he was sharing some of his vulnerabilities. I found the courage to say to Philip "I usually have the Quiche Lorraine ..."

"Sounds good!" He closed his menus and told the waiter that it was his choice.

I felt further embolden. “You should try their Soup a l’Onion. It’s to die for!”

I said with abandon

“Ok.” He said this in a light musical way.

“If I order a Caesar Salad will you share it with me?” I don’t know why I said this but it sort of came out of my mouth all by itself. I turned to my mother and asked her if this was ok? She smiled and nodded.

“Sure, I might have a nibble or two,” he said then put his hand on mine. I gushed again. There was no doubt about it, it was Phillip was wetting my panties.

My brother is such a nerd. Now that the meal was ordered Raymond just had to talk science over dinner. My parents give him far too much freedom and me much less so. So off he went for a long five minutes, chemistry this, math that. I discovered that while they both had an interest in Mathematics, Phillip enjoyed physics and astronomy more than Chemistry. Still he could keep up with Raymond and his chemistry,

Then that was a pause and I saw my chance. I nervously asked Phillip about Gary Grant and he began to talk in a distinctive English accent which made me laugh hysterically. “Mind your manners at the table young lady” my father remarked. I had tripped over myself and before Raymond could utter another of his snide remarks the subject was changed.

I sensed Phillip was drifting towards boredom in his conversation with Raymond. When there was a pause in their conversation I tried my best to find something interesting to talk with Phillip about. But time and time again my brother cut us off.bb“Sis we’re talking,” my brother jeered at me.

I was about to get angry with him when I felt Phillips hand gently squeeze my thigh. I put my hand on his hand. Then the waiter arrived with our French Onion Soup and bread, with butter.

My brother had ordered *escargot* ... which shut him up. Figure the French to take the common garden snails, bake them in garlic and butter and then offer *les escargot* as a delicacy! Yuck! Yuck! Yuck! I turned away because I could not watch my brother eat his slugs! I don’t mind champignon, in butter and garlic, but I draw the line at eating garden creatures like frogs or snails

Phillip whispered to me “... best we let the soup cool a bit.” Then he said louder, “You wanted to ask me something?”

Phillip was taking notice of me! My mind went blank and I started to panic! I was usually not one lost for words but oh my God, for some reason, at that particular moment I was not able to say anything sensible. So I just said the first thing that came to mind. “Thanks for taking me to the washroom ...” Oh how silly of me!

He smiled an understanding smile. “Any time. That’s what friends are for.”

I gushed. He was a boy and I am a girl and we were friends! Does that make him my boyfriend, and me her girlfriend? For a split second a happy smile crossed his face as if he was reading my mind.

Then we both started to enjoy our soup. We both took our sweet time. My brother had slurped down his escargot and had butter dripping down his chin and onto his tie. My mother noticed this and told him to go to the men's room and clean himself up. He ignored what she had said and so my mother glared at my father. I was always prim and proper. My brother, on the other hand, was such a slob that at times I wondered if we were indeed siblings, and also wondered if all boys were slobs.

Reluctantly Raymond pushed himself back from the table and set off to the men's room. My mother sent my father to sort things out with him, leaving just her, Phillip and I at the table.

Then she did something awkward. "Are things ok my dear ... do you need to go to the ladies?"

I blushed. "I am fine mom!" I whispered to her.

"In that case I will go see what is up your brother." She got up leaving the two of us alone at the table. For an awkward few seconds we said nothing then we both sipped at our soups.



I glanced over at him and noticed that the napkin on his lap had formed a sort of tent. He noticed that I had noticed this and whispered to me “I am so sorry, I can’t get it to stop. It’s got a mind of its own.”

I gave out a subdued giggle and responded, “I noticed that at the movie theater.”

“You did, did you!”

In a fit of pique I nudged the corner of his napkin towards me with my fingers.

He turned to look at me with a worried look on his face. He put his hand on my hand. “Oh please don’t do that ...” he started to blush.

“Does this happen all the time?”

“No ... really it doesn’t. It’s just ...”

“Just what?”

“When you grabbed my hand in the movie theater ... that’s when it started.” I fought the urge to reach out and touch his “stiffy” which is what I heard one of my classmates call the boy thingy. One of my classmates at school has a baby brother. She said to me that boys have “stiffies” from the moment they are born and in fact that is what her brother had when he came into the world.

I had never seen what boys looks like, so I could only imagine what these were.

I was about to look down at his lap when I spied my mother approaching with my brother and father in tow. I whispered “I am excited too ...’ I leaned close to his ear and whispered. “I have been gushing since you held my hand,”

“Gushing?”

“Wetting my panties. That’s what girls do when they are excited”

His face went a lovely shade of crimson. “OH!” Then we both lowered our heads and returned to our French Onion soup.

I could tell my brother had been given a talking to by our father for when he took his seat he turned to me and apologized for being so rude to me. Even though it was his birthday my parents would not let him get away with being mean to me. The main courses arrived just as Phillip and I finished our soup. He started to chat with his Phillip. Then my brother clammed up as he was served his *boeuf au poivre*.

As I ate my quiche with the fork in my right hand I slowly moved my left hand off the table. When I was sure no one noticed what I was doing with my left hand I carefully began to pull the napkin off Phillip’s lap. He didn’t seem to mind. Phillip let me do it.

Phillip switched his fork from his right hand to his left then slowly moved his right hand off the table and set it atop my hand which was now on his leg. Then he drew a heart on the back of my hand with his finger and slowly returned his right hand back onto the table and switched his fork back to his right hand. I put my left hand back on the table too but not before I drew my dress up my left leg as an invitation to him. A few minutes later he took up my invitation and drew a heart on the inside of my leg half way between my knee and my panties. I gushed fulltime.

It was fun flirting with Phillip. I don't think anyone at the table had any clue what we were doing.

Then the empty dinner dishes were cleared and the cake came. While everyone was distracted on the cake I boldly took my hand and placed it atop his stiffy. He knew I was doing this but Phillip did not stop me. I could feel something through the cloth of his pants but what it was I could only imagine. We sang Raymond Happy Birthday and he blew out his fourteen candles, leaving none alight. I smiled for I knew my brother had no time for any girls in his life, not even a sister. Chemistry was his one and only girlfriend!

After a minute Phillip put his hand on mine, opened his legs and guided my hand down to between his legs then wrapped my fingers upwards. I suddenly understood there was much more to a boy than just one part! There were two of something down there! I jiggled my fingers back and forth and only stopped when I was handed my piece of cake.

My gush was now a flood. I hoped my panties could soak up all my wetness. I was so excited I nearly dropped the cake on the table. “Be careful dear ...” my mother said. If only she knew what my distraction was!

I was hoping Phillip would slip his hand off the table for if he had I would have taken hold and guided him right up between my legs so that he could tickle my softness. Time came to a slow. The throb of my sex marked the passage of seconds, then minutes ... but Phillip kept both his hands on the table.

We ate our cake in silence and before we knew it, it was time to go. We wanted to drive Phillip home but he said that he would be taking the bus and staying over at his grandparents that evening. As we stepped out into the cold November night I was very warm inside.

I sadly watched Phillip walk off in the dim light of the street. Then I gave my mother a big hug, because I felt the need for her to give me one in return. Then I took her hand and we walked behind my father and Raymond as they rushed to the car.

“You like Phillip don’t you?” How do mothers know such things?

“He’s nice,” I said nonchalantly. But it didn’t fool her. “I think he likes you too. I saw the blush on his face when the two of you were alone at the table.” My mother got into the back seat with me and let my brother take her seat in

the front. Then she let me sit on her lap as we drove home, hugging me the whole time as if she did not want to let me go. I was her little girl after all.

When we got home it was past ten and time to get ready for bed. My mother came into my room just as I was getting ready to put on my pajamas and said I should take a bath first. Then she walked with me into the bathroom and while I undressed she poured me a warm bath with bubbles.

Then she took a face cloth and wet it under the tap, rubbed some soap into it and handed it to me. “You are growing up so quickly ...”

When my mother started a sentence with “you are growing up so quickly ...” I knew she had something special to talk to me about.

“You want to tell me about babies and all that, don’t you?”

“I think it is time dear ... after all you are almost thirteen.”

“Maybe not tonight mom ... it’s late and I am tired.” I yawned, stepped into the bath and sat down in the warm water. The warm water felt so good against my sex. My legs had made a crevice in the soap bubbles so I pushed some bubbles over my legs to hide my nakedness. For some reason I was felt self-conscious of the fact I was naked. My mother had seen me naked many times before. Why was tonight so different.? My sex throbbed. Then I knew why. I was no longer just a little girl.

“Well ... ok. We will leave it for some other time dear. Here ... clean between your legs.” She handed me the face cloth. “Then rinse off with plenty of water from the tap. Make sure it is not too hot or you will hurt the sensitive parts of you.”

My mother closed the door. Suddenly I was all alone in a rather awkward spot for the door was unlocked. I got out of the tub, leaving behind wet footsteps on the floor mat. When I got to the door I decided not to lock it. It was a rule not to lock the bathroom door in our home just in case someone slipped and hit their head and drowned in the tub. One of our elderly dotting aunt did this and by the time they had forced the door she had expired. For a few seconds I just stood there naked dripping soapy water on the floor. I shivered and turned back to the warm water.

When I go back into the tub the moment the water once again touched my sex this sent a warm shiver down my spine. I looked down at myself and saw that I was fully aroused. It would have been next to impossible for my mother not to notice this.

It took me a moment to realize she knew how aroused I was but had left me to explore my sexuality all by myself. Never before had I washed myself between my legs with a wash cloth. Mom had given me one of her “one offs” wash cloths. It was a soft white cotton throw away wash cloth that she only used once then tossed in the garbage. I always wondered what she used them for. Now I figured it out.

As I looked at the soft white cotton I suddenly understood why they were “one ofs.” They were meant to wash the sensitive parts of a woman. Oh my! By giving me a “one of” was my mother saying I was now a woman? I also realized that mom had opened a new bar of soap, one of her rose scented ones, and had used it to lather up the “one of.” Even the bubble bath was her rose scented salts instead of my usual child’s strawberry balm. I guess in her eyes I was no longer just a girl.

I did not sit bath into the bath water but kneeled as I washed myself. The first touch of the cotton cloth tingled me. I suddenly had the urge to pee so I stepped out of the bath and sat on the toilet and emptied my bladder. Even this felt different. More so than usual I felt the urgent flow of water out of my bladder. I guess being so aroused with blood my sex was more sensitive than usually.

I looked down and at the crest of me projected a soft pink protrusion which I had never seen before. I touched it with my finger and the effect was pleasantly electric. I touched it again and it seemed to grow ever so bigger. When I did this I gushed and so I understood that while it had in the past been hidden away, at this moment it had come out of me because I am so aroused.

I flushed the toilet and got back into the bath. I heard the door handle jiggle. | Is anyone in there?” It was my brother!

“I am in the bath tub.”

“I need to pee.”

“You had your chance ... before I got in the tub.”

“How long will you be?”

How could I really answer that? So I said, “g pose mom and dad’s.”

“Can’t ...

“Why not?” I knew where this was going so I sat in the bath and covered myself with as many bubbles as I could.

“Mom’s is taking a bath.” The penny dropped. He was coming in!

“So am I ... you just have to wait!”

“I am coming in ...”

“No ... don’t come in!” That didn’t stop Raymond. The door opened tentatively and I screamed “dad!” Raymond has done this to me so many times this is the reason why I always pour myself a bubble bath.

In a split second my dad appeared at the door and said ...”let him pee then he will leave you be. Just close your eyes. ”



What could I do? Raymond stepped inside and my father disappeared. I turned my head as I always did, but this time I decided not to close my eyes. Out of the corner of my eye I could see something pink that he was holding with both his hands that looked like his thumb without a nail. At from the tip of it arced a stream of yellow pee. I only saw a centimeter or so of its tip but it was still a revelation. Then he shook it to get rid of the last drops of pee and when he did this I could see that unlike his thumb which was stiff, his “stiffy” was actually quite flexible.

In a blink he was out of the bathroom, forgetting to flush to toilet, which was one of his many bad habits. He also let the door ajar to annoy me. I got ip out of the tub, flushed to toilet then walked to the door, pushed it shut and locked it. Then I went back to the tub but decided not to sit in the water but to stand and wash myself.

By now the wash cloth was no longer warm. Its cold touch against my sensitive skin caused me to shudder. I touched the little pinkness of me through the cold cloth and shuddered a second time, this instant with more intensity. It was so refreshing that I decided not to warm the cloth but continue to use its coldness to stimulate me.

Recently my mother caught me masturbating in my bedroom late at night. She had crept in because she heard an unusual muffled sound. I was on my stomach tickling myself and had my face in my pillow. As I passed the cold wash cloth across my sex it was having the same effect but I did not have a

pillow to muffle my joy so I stopped washing my sex just when I was about to lose my composure.

I sat back down in the bubble bath and the warm water against my sex caused it to throb even more uniquely. First one moment cold and the next moment warm! I tingled electrically. Like earlier this evening, I was now feeling sensations I had never felt before. Press on I thought, press on. It was all undiscovered these feelings!

I pulled the plug and let the tub begin to drain. Then I looked at spigot and for the first time saw it as something masculine and anthropomorphic. I grabbed the knob and paused while I decided on a water temperature. It would make sense to turn the knob to warm but what I was doing now did not make much sense. Instead I turned the tap water to cold, set a dribble a flow and let the frigid water trickled across my sex. The outside of me winced while deep inside of me I felt something convulse.

We are talking deep inside of me. The convulsions grew and grew while they passed from deep inside of me to the outside of me in the biggest involuntary gush I had yet experienced. I let out an involuntary sigh that must have been heard throughout our house. Then I turned up the flow of cold water and my body responded in kind. My whole-self began to shake and I could feel my heart racing.

I was having my first orgasm. Perhaps it is the power that boys now have over me?



## ***Boy Have I Been a Naughty Girl by Laura***

I admit I have been a naughty girl. My parents are traditional. They think little girls should be proper and nice. They should only speak when spoken to by an elder. They should sit up straight at the table and eat their vegetables. They should think nice thoughts and well ... you know ... wait until they are married to 'do it.'

But then every school day I am around classmates whose parents allow them to think a different way. It is hard to be nice and proper when the many people I spend my days with are not always as good as I am supposed to be.

I have a Chinese heritage and am the only child. My father had hoped for a baby boy when China had a one child policy, and was disappointed when I arrived. Now that the one child policy has changed my mother tells him she is too old and tired to provide him with a son. My father keeps on asking her but my mother keeps on saying "one child is enough." When I hear this I wonder if I have been a terrible burden on my parents, and whether my father might want to trade me in for a boy. He says 'hurry up and get married and give me a grandson' ... talk about pressure!

I just don't understand what's up with Chinese parents and their wanting sons. Some of my parent's friends have boys and well, to be perfectly honest I don't think they are as grown up and independent as I am. Their parents doddle over their sons, much more than my parents doddle over me because I am a girl.

Some of my Canadian friends have brothers, some who are younger and some who are older than we are. I steer clear of the older boys because they only have three things on their mind, drinking, having fun and ... having fun with girls. And you know the kind of fun they want with girls don't you. It was always easy to see how aroused they are by the bumps in their pants.

And why do they always want to put their hands down the front of my panties. More than once to stop them I have had to say "not today, I am menstruating. Your hand will be covered in blood!" Now I have the reputation of being constantly in misery.

So the older boys now leave me alone. I don't mind the younger ones. Sometimes my friends let their younger brothers tag along when we do things together like going shopping, or to a movie. For me it is funny to watch the behavior of their younger brothers. These young boys do such silly things or act in such silly ways. I don't remember when we were their age that my girlfriends and I ever acted so silly.

Most of the times my girlfriends leave me alone, but now that spring is here there are starting to tease me. My friends are now teasing me because I have never done it with a boy, or even touched one, or done the hand or the oral thingy. I can understand why touching would be a thrill, but pumping their thingy or licking it till he squirts icky gooey stuff ... what's there to be found in this? I would rather have a Dairy Queen Sunday please.

I have not even kissed a boy, except my father and an uncle, but that doesn't really count does it. Besides I kissed them on the cheek. My girlfriends and I have done the practice thing as far as kissing is concerned. Smooching they call it. OMG!

At one of my sleep overs last summer my closest friend pushed me into ... doing it ... in a way that only two girls can do it. She being more experienced than I am explained to whole 'doing it' thing. She literally did push me, sitting on top of me while she unbuttoned the top of my p j's and tickled and caressed my breasts. I struggled just enough so that if someone asked I could say I did.

I was frightened to begin with but in a few minutes my body tingled and she knew it. Then she pulled my p j pants down off of me and slipped out of hers and buried her lips over my ... I don't know what to call it. It felt so good to feel her warm and soft kisses. I was worried she might break my hymen. But she was very careful. My body came alive and I had my first ever orgasm.

Then she asked me to do the same things to her and awkwardly I did. She tasted different than I do. I have pleased myself often enough to know how I tasted. As I struggled she told me what she wanted me to do. It took her much longer than I had to get excited. Then she suddenly shuddered. I had given her an orgasm too.

After it was all over we cuddled, and I don't think I have felt so close to another person like I felt at that special moment. Then we talked. What surprised her is that I am not in a big hurry to have sex with a boy. Just the

idea that girls let boys put their ... thingy ... inside a girl so they can leave behind some icky gooeey stuff freaks me out. It's bad enough that once a month I have to bleed from there, but honestly, that's enough trouble for me!

What really upset my best girlfriend the most is that I have not even seen what a boy looks like in real life. I have seen pictures and films with naked men in them. The pictures and movies of naked men stir something inside of me, so I don't just only like girls. But I told her I get most of my pleasures, well, you know, late at night when I am alone and can't sleep. She said half of her girlfriends admit to pleasing themselves, while the other half are 'doing it' with the boys.

A few months later on a school day at noon my best girlfriend grabbed me by the arm and said "follow me ... you're skipping and coming to drawing class."

"Why?" I asked.

"We have a male model for life drawing today and he is going to be naked!"

"I don't think I should come, I'll get in trouble! Besides the teacher won't let me in."

"You took her drawing class last term. Didn't you miss the day they had a model?"

"Yes, I was sick at home with a cold."

“I think she’ll say its fine because you missed last time they had a model.

“But last time it was a woman ...”

“And this year it’s a man! Come on ... this will be the first time you’ll see what boys looks like.”

She would not let go of my arm so I just let her drag me along. There was a sign on the studio door that said ‘do not enter drawing class in session.’ That didn’t stop her. She just knocked. When there was no answer she knocked again and again until the door swung open and there stood a man dress in a white robe wearing flip flops.

“I think you are a little early aren’t you?,” he said.

That didn’t stop my friend, she just smiled and pushed past him and the man had no choice but to let us both in. He closed the door behind us.

“The teacher is not here yet.” He said this quietly. “She won’t be back for another forty five minutes.”

My friend was bold beyond words. Pointing at me she said, “she has never seen a naked man before.”



He turned to me and said. “So today in life drawing class this will be your first time?” He said this more as a statement than a question.

“Well, I am not really in today’s class. But she is.” I pointed to my friend.

Without asking she grabbed one end of the belt of the man’s robe. There was an awkward silence. He didn’t stop her, so she took a step back, tugging on the belt and the robe opened. He stayed silent, letting his robe slide down off his shoulders and fall to the floor in a mound at his feet.

Then there in front of me was a naked man. My friend giggled. “Aren’t you glad you came?”

My heart was pounding. I had stopped breathing. I struggled to find the words.

Slowly he turned around to let me see all of him. He was beautiful.

By the time he had turned back to face me my friend had taken out her cellphone and was taking a picture of him and his naughty bits. He was not fast enough to stop her.

He hurried put his robe back on and said “you better erase that or we will all be in trouble.”

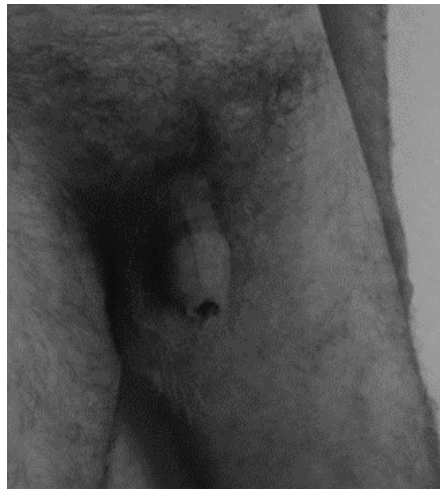
When he said this I had visions of my parents finding out I had been a naughty girl. I lost my nerve and said “I am going ...” and flew from the room.

A few minutes later my friend texted me. “Where are you?”

I didn’t answer.

“Its ok ... he’s not angry. You can come back.”

Again I didn’t answer. A minute later she sent me a picture she had taken of him.



Oh my god! My heart skipped a beat. I texted back. “I am not coming. I can’t ...”

“Why?”

“I just can’t ...”

“Why then?”

I wished she would just let the whole matter drop! But she didn’t.

“Are you afraid?”

“No ...”

“Embarrassed?”

“No ...”

“Aroused?”

“Yes ...very.” I was very aroused. I was in the girl’s bathroom fingering myself.

“What’s wrong with being aroused?”

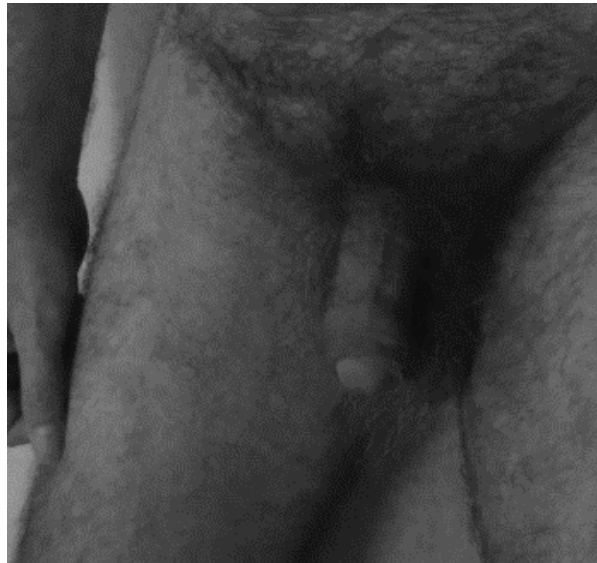
“I won’t be able to concentrate and draw.”

“So? I don’t think any of the girls in the class will. We’ll just wet our panties ...”

I was happy when the bell rang, announcing the end of lunch. I texted her “enjoy your drawing ...I am going to class.”

I went to Home Economics instead of the drawing class but I could not keep my mind on the sewing project I was working on, pricking my fingers several times and drawing blood more than once. My sex throbbed.

All during that hour my friend kept on texting me with the progress of the drawing class. And sending me pictures too! She knew exactly what she was doing to me.



I could feel my face getting warm as I began to blush. The pictures she was sending me was taking me through the different states of his arousal ...



... and mine as well!

After several more messages and pictures my teacher saw I was distracted and said “shall I take away your phone? You know the rule about cellphones in class.”

I texted my friend to say “I need to concentrate on my sewing project” and that I was turning my phone off. I kept my cellphone off the rest of the afternoon at school and didn’t turn it back on until I got home. I was too aroused.

An hour after school I texted my friend to say “I am sorry I had to run off.” I felt bold enough to tell her “I went to pleasure myself ...I was so aroused.”

She answered back. “You should have stayed, you would have seen more. My panties are still wet!” She sent me another picture. I wondered how she was able to take such spicy photos. Oh my god was I aroused!



I was alone in my room. I got up and locked the door. I took off my school uniform. When I took my bra off my nipples were hard. My panties were wet.

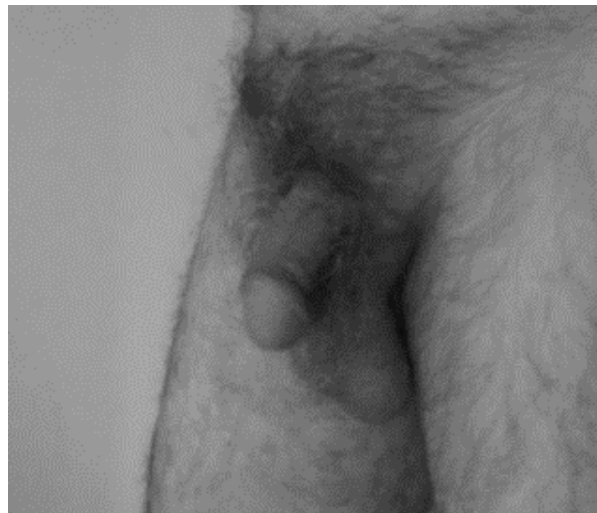
I stacked four pillows at the head of my bed and was now leaning back hard against the pillows, completely and unashamedly naked, with my legs spread very wide apart. I turned my bedroom lights off and the only glow was from my cellphone which I had placed between my legs propped up on my rolled up p j s. I began to please myself in the way that I knew best aroused me.

My back grew ever so hot against the pillows. My fingers began to get thick and viscid with my excitement. A few days ago I had ovulated and I was starting to thicken as my prelude to menstruation.

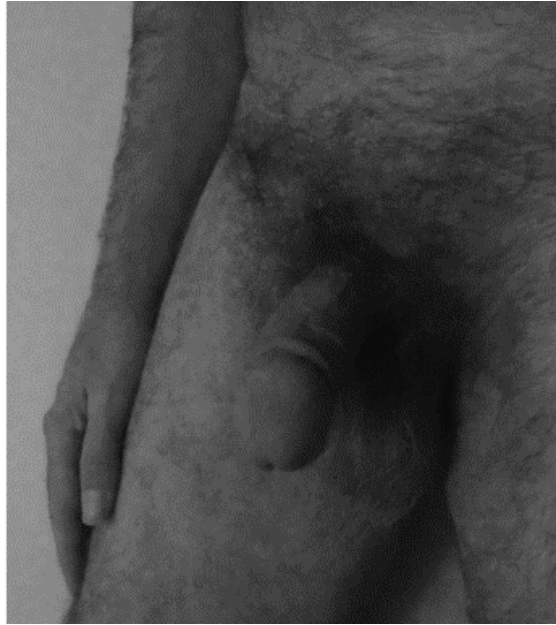
My friend somehow knew what I was doing and slowly sent me more pictures ...one after another ... to edge me on.



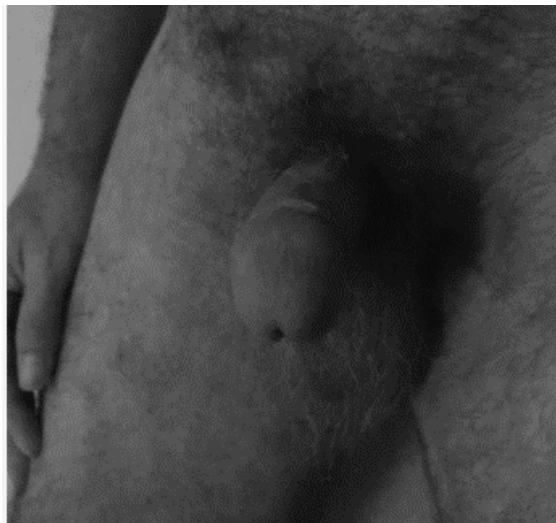
And a few minutes later ... I watched as he grew ...



And grew ... imagining him there in front of me.



It was fascinating. I wish I had stayed and enjoyed this in person. But then I would not be able to find the pleasure I enjoyed in this moment.



In a few minutes I think my sex was as red and aroused as his was! Then he was erect!





As I pleased myself I felt my fingers curl inwards and into me. Then my fingernail caught some skin and I felt a twitch of pain. When I looked down at my hand I could see a trickle of blood. That didn't stop me.

I closed my eyes and pressed on. I was being a very naughty girl. Then I came with a gush. I had to put my hand over my mouth to stifle my orgasmic joy.

After I was finished I texted my friend to tell her how wonderful I felt and to thank her for arousing me. Then I asked her how she got to take the pictures. "Cellphones are not allowed during class time!"

She sent me a kissy-kissy emoji with the words "you figure it out ... " then she sent me one last picture ... OMG are boys funny looking.



“He is really quite nice ... he says he likes sitting for art students. I have asked him whether he will sit for just the two of us this Saturday ... interested?”

“AM I! ... WHEN & WHERE!”

It was only then that I noticed I had smeared blood all over the face of my cellphone. When I turned the light on I saw I had bled all over my bed sheets. I was a week away from my next period. How was I going to explain this to my mother without attracting suspicion? Frantically I texted my friend and asked her what I should do.

“Gather up the bed sheets and wrapped them in a plastic bag and hide it in your closet. Then, put on new bed sheets. When you have your next period put them back on your bed and no one will suspect a thing!” I did exactly what she said.

Then I had a hot shower to wash the blood off. While I was under the shower all I could think about were the pictures! Soaping myself made the feeling more intense. I had another orgasm. This time I did not stifle my happiness.

Boy, have I been a naughty girl!

## Science Fiction

## ***Boy Was He Right! By Patrick Bruskiewich***

The view from the forward portal was spectacular and unique in the Solar System, but after ten monotonous days of the *same ol' same ol'* he was bored. He was also exhausted. They had just two days left in the data collection then it was time to dash home. But they had slipped behind in their schedule and had more than two days of work undone. The launch window was narrow, just a few hours, and well ... he was not in the mood to tempt fate.

Beyond his exhaustion he was bored, and tried very hard to hide his inner feeling, but the astronaut in the seat next to him knew his state of mind. If her hair had not been trimmed back into a severe haircut she would be adorable, but her buzz cut made her look stern beyond words. When they first met she had soft luxurious red hair down to the small of her back. She looked over at him and gave him the evil eye “get back to work!” He smirked and turned back to his instruments. “We are running out of time!” she scoured.

“Yes boss ...”

“Stop calling me that!”

“Yes, commander”. He only toyed with her when they were on the backside of the planet and not on VOX. It annoyed him to know that all their words were being ‘recorded for posterity’.

He sighed.

“Stopped that ... or I will push you out the hatch and you can walk home.”

She had taken the edge of her words which told him she understood his angst. Most other people fight depression in their lives, but for as long as he could remember he fought lacunae, which in many ways was much worse than the occasional bout of melancholy. He had a busy and brilliant mind, but this was not always appreciated by the people around him. How easily he was bored!

He was on autopilot. Having done this search mode a hundred times in the past ten days his fingers took on a life separate from his consciousness as they selected modalities on his touch screen. He started to day dream.

When he was chosen two years ago for the Mission his excitement lasted until the third week of training and then his lacunae set in. It took him a monumental effort to survive the remaining seventeen and a half months of their flight training. When his efficiency and concentration started to fall they almost replaced him with a backup crew member. But he rallied through his lacunae. When the two of them were launched there was a week of excitement but on the rest of their four month transit to Venus he had slipped back into his funk.

It had been hard for him to watch as that little blue dot of an Earth got smaller and smaller as they proceeded to the second rock from the sun. It was the first time that humans would be visiting the Venetian system, and the two of them

would find their names in the record books beside Armstrong and Aldrin, Williamson and Paul.

Why he had chosen to volunteer for a mission to the hellish planet instead of Mars is something that journalists had asked him many times, but he had left unanswered. He could not explain to them the reason why without losing his place on this mission. How could he explain that he was like an extreme athlete trying to stay ahead of his adrenaline addiction, when telling the world of his battle with lacunae was why he was here. If he had stated the reason why the medicos would have booted him not only off this mission but perhaps even out of the manned space flight program.

So every time the journalists asked he wisely steered the question to the commander and left it at that.

The commander broke his daydreaming. “Two minutes to AOS ...”

“Do we have to do this?”

“WE have no choice ...”

“But we are at least four hours behind in our research schedule.”

“That doesn’t matter to them. Is plain and simple ... *no Bucks no Buck Rogers.*” There was a subdued tone in her voice which told him she agreed with his logic but had to abide by their *Dictat*.

“Huh?” He played dumb but he knew what she intimated. The broadcast was for PR.

“You continue your data collection and I will amuse them for you.”

“Thanks boss ...” This time she let his impertinence slide.

The intercom staticed them came alive with a familiar voice. “Venture, this is Capcom.” She responded immediately and they both waited the six minute delay for a reply from Earth. He smiled, waved and then turned back to his console.

He let his fingers run on, as he day dreamed back to when was in grad school studying astrophysics. In his second year of grad school he had come across the *Two Parameter Turbulence Model for (Exo)planetary Formation*.<sup>1</sup> It was a controversial theorem that challenged the prevailing model of (Exo)planetary Formation.

The prevailing model, the nebular model, stemmed back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Kant and Descartes both speculated about the formation of the Solar System. Kant should have known better having written his *Critique of Pure Reason* but the moment they had put pen to paper harm had been done. It was naïve of them to presume they knew anything about what they wrote about. Neither Kant nor Descartes were scientists by any measure of the imagination. Kant was at least a thinker of the first order, while Descartes was



unexceptional beyond any measure. Descartes needed the money and so he wrote about anything and everything thinking more of his stomach than about good science. It was because of Descartes' penchant for mediocrity and mad speculation that Newton had evoked his *Hypothese Non Fingo*, and gave the French metaphysician the finger.

The *Two Parameter Turbulence Model for (Exo)planetary Formation* theorem was based on modern astrophysics and was simply and logically, predicated on the radius of the central star and the Reynolds number for different categories of materials that coalesce into planetary forms. However logical as it may seem, this 21<sup>st</sup> century theorem had to contend with four centuries of inertia and laziness in the thinking of astronomers and astrophysicists.

It was in two short papers by the astrophysicist who proposed the two parameter theorem that a qualitative overview was presented of the basic structures of the four terrestrial planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. Then out came his prediction that during planetary formation, the segregation of materials based on their densities and refractory properties would leave large concentrations of Uranium and Thorium within the planet Venus. This might mean that at some time in the past the inside of Venus may have gone supercritical disrupting the core. This would have an effect on the Venetian magnetosphere (and even opened the question as to whether Venus ever had a magnetosphere).

It was one of these epiphany moments when you strike your forehead with the palm of your hand and say “*I could have thought of this.*”

The first idea that had to be set aside was the notion that Venus and Earth were sister planets. The second idea to accept is that the segregation of materials on their densities and refractory properties would make the inner structure of each of the terrestrial planets different from each other. The third idea that a giant nuclear reactor within Venus would explain the hellish nature of the surface of Venus had been met with a storm of controversy by the atmospherics ... the minions who claimed that the hell on Venus was merely due to a “run away greenhouse effect.” Every time he heard this from a smart aleck astronomer he had wished they would run away ... and take their prejudgments with them.

The author of the Two Parameter Turbulence Model had even received what was obviously the offer of a bribe from a prominent Nobel Peace Prize Winner who had made his name on Climate Change, the Green House Effect on planet Earth.

How had the astrophysicist responded? He responded as any good scientist would writing a series of papers reminding the world that every time you combusted an octane molecule you produced not merely eight Carbon Dioxide molecules but nine water molecules, using up twelve and a half oxygen molecules. He also reminded the world that water is not merely a working fluid moving heat from one place to another on the Earth (something that Carbon Dioxide does not do) but he then stood on his soap box and

reminded the world that water is a greenhouse gas a thousand times worse than Carbon Dioxide. He also wondered as to the long term viability of life while we use up Oxygen molecules in this way and asked the valid scientific question why no one has studied the time evolution of the partial pressure of Oxygen in the post-Industrial atmosphere.

Then out came the Flat Earthers ...the environmental extremists ... and Anarchists. A bounty was placed on his head by the Nobel Peace Prize Winner. The astrophysicist had to go into hiding. When the Oslo Committee pondered this perverse twist of events, for the first time in its history the Nobel Peace Prize was stripped from the extremist for his arrogance towards good science. The following year the Nobel Peace Prize was offered to the astrophysicist who publicly thanked the committee then declined the honor for fear for his life and safety. The Oslo Committee decided to not award a Nobel Peace Prize that year.

That was the day he received the phone call from Houston asking him to consider serving on Venture. They offered him a day to think about the mission but he accepted the challenge immediately and without reservations. He owed it to the astrophysicist to do the science to see if there are traces of radionucleotides left over from nuclear fission on the surface of atmosphere of Venus.

He turned back to the commander who was doing the best she could under the strange circumstances of a live broadcast across such a great distance. The broadcast had been stilted. The questions were orchestrated and the Earth side

of the broadcast had been uploaded to her and she had to sit at her console and play act, making the whole thing look natural.

As he looked at her he thought of how his feeling towards her had softened. He also sensed her consideration of him has changed as well as the mission progressed in its successes. Nominal launch. Nominal transfer orbit. Nominal Venetian orbital insertion. Nominal deployment of the gondola and high altitude balloon. Nominal start of nucleotide assay. Nominal ... Nominal ... Nominal. Who the hell came up with this word!

Now that the survey and nucleotide assay portion of their mission to Venus was nearly completed she had opened up a bit. She was no longer as cold and formal as she had been over the past twenty two months. When she had been asked to command *Venture* she had asked who she would be crewed with and when she was told spent an entire day pondering the request. He was not her first choice. She had in fact hoped for an ‘all girl’ crew.

He, on the other hand, was not told in advanced who would command the mission, only that it would not be him. She had not been his first choice, not even his second or third, but he was wise enough not to hint his disappointment when the two were introduced to each other just minutes before the press conference announcing the primary *Venture* crew.

She was chosen to command because she was a Naval Captain and aviator who was also a qualified medical doctor. He on the other has was ‘a mere civi ...’ as she once quipped. He had a Master’s in nuclear astrophysics. Her job

was to get them safely to Venus and back to Earth. His job was to do the science.

He smiled as the scatterplot histogram filled with data. For the past eight days they had collected nanoparticles from the high atmosphere of Venus. The nanoparticles had been sent through a molecular sieve. A mere tera mole of lead sulphides had been sequestered and sent to the nuclear assay instrumentation. They assayed the lead ratio.

She turned to him and asked in front of the camera, ‘anything to report?’ He could see she had cupped her right hand in the secret signal they had agreed upon giving him the green light to share the latest scientific fact.

He nodded at her.

“Well,” she said with enthusiasm.

“He was right ... boy was he right! There is lots of Uranium and Thorium within Venus and it hasn’t been sitting doing nothing!”

He did the thumbs up sign. The radionucleotides assay clearly showed that not only had there been nuclear reactions within Venus, but they appear to still be on going!

The commander turned back to the camera and cleared her throat. “Well Capcom we have accomplished the main purpose of our mission to Venus ...

The next few words of hers were music to his ears.

“Any chance we can move up our return to Earth by a day or two ... over.” She pressed the button which turned off the camera, and set VOX to off then stood up from her seat and stretched. It was LOS. He watched as she set the zipper of her flight suit down a good ten centimeters. As she stretched he noticed the gentle slopes of her breast.

She noticed he had noticed and smiled warmly. “It will take a few hours for Mission Control to decide on our request to return early, but given that you have made the important measure of trace radionucleotides there is not real reason for us to continue floating here in the atmosphere of Venus. I want to get the hell out of here before our balloon pops.”

“You sure about this?”

She nodded “it is the commander’s prerogative.”

“What will we do to celebrate?”

I am quite sure we shall think of something. She glanced at the clock. “We have forty minutes.

“Yes ... commander.”

“Call me Kate.”

He let the instruments to continue autonomously, stood up and smiled. “Yes, Kate.”

“Shall we join the many mile high club?”

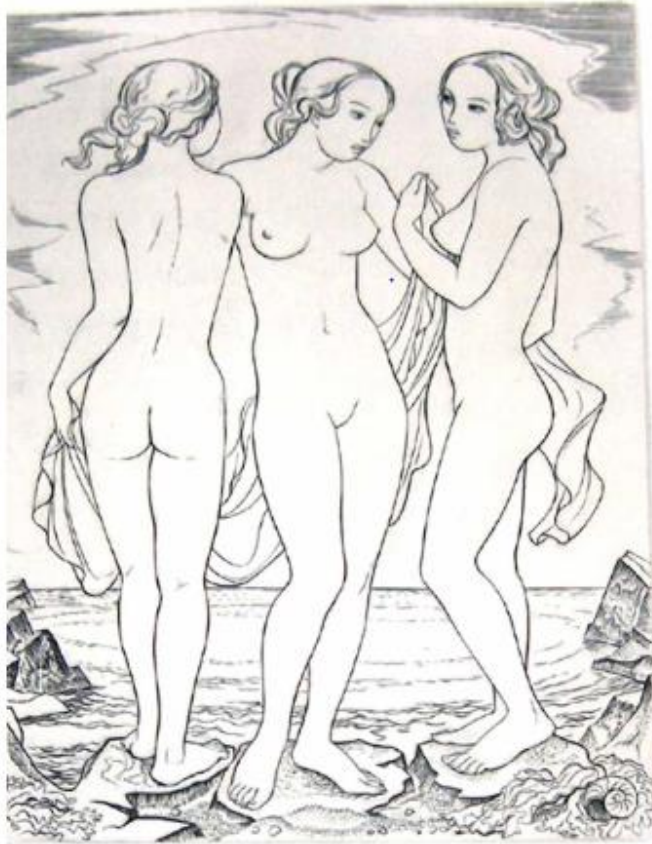
He was no longer bored.

***Pictorial: How Now! My Little Chickadee***





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## Canadian Poems

## ***Poems by Isabella Valancy Crawford***

### **Songs for the Soldiers**

If songs be sung let minstrels strike their harps  
To large and joyous strains, all thunder-winged  
To beat along vast shores. Ay, let their notes  
Wild into eagles soaring toward the sun,  
And voiced like bugles bursting through the dawn  
When armies leap to life! Give them such breasts  
As hold immortal fires, and they shall fly,  
Swept with our little sphere through all the change  
That waits a whirling world.

Joy's an immortal;  
She hath a fiery fibre in her flesh  
That will not droop or die; so let her chant  
The paeans of the dead, w<sup>h</sup>ere holy Grief  
Hath, trembling, thrust the feeble mist aside  
That veils her dead, and in the wondrous clasp  
Of re-possession ceases to be Grief.

Joy's ample voice shall still roll over all,  
And chronicle the heroes to young hearts  
Who knew them not  
There's glory on the sword  
That keeps its scabbard-sleep, unless the foe  
Beat at the wall, then freely leaps to light

And thrusts to keep the sacred towers of Home  
And the dear lines that map the nation out upon the world.

### **His Mother**

In the first dawn she lifted from her bed  
The holy silver of her noble head.  
And listened, listened, listened for his tread.  
'Too soon, too soon!' she murmured, 'Yet I'll keep  
My vigil longer—thou, O tender Sleep,  
Art but the joy of those who wake and weep!  
'Joy's self hath keen, wide eyes. O flesh of mine.  
And mine own blood and bone, the very wine  
Of my aged heart, I see thy dear eyes shine!  
'I hear thy tread ; thy light, loved footsteps run  
Along the way, eager for that 'Well done!'  
We'll weep and kiss to thee, my soldier son  
'Blest mother I—he lives ! Yet had he died  
Blest were I still,—I sent him on the tide  
Of my full heart to save his nation's pride!  
'O God, if that I tremble so to-day.  
Bowed with such blessings that I cannot pray  
By speech—a mother prays, dear Lord, alway  
'In some far fibre of her trembling mind!  
I'll up—I thought I heard a bugle bind  
Its silver with the silver of the wind.'

## His Wife and Baby

In the lone place of the leaves,  
Where they touch the hanging eaves,  
There sprang a spray of joyous song that sounded sweet and  
sturdy  
;  
And the baby in the bed  
Raised the shining of his head.  
And pulled the mother's lids apart to wake and watch the birdie.  
She kissed lip-dimples sweet,  
The red soles of his feet,  
The waving palms that patted hers as wind-blown blossoms  
wander  
;  
He twined her tresses silk  
Round his neck as white as milk  
—  
'Now, baby, say what birdie sings upon his green spray yonder.'  
'He sings a plenty things  
—  
Just watch him wash his wings I  
He says Papa will march to-day with drums home through the  
city.  
Here, birdie, here's my cup.

You drink the milk all up;  
I'll kiss you, birdie, now you're washed like baby clean and  
pretty.'  
She rose; she sought the skies  
With the twin joys of her eyes;  
She sent the strong dove of her soul up through the dawning's  
glory ;  
She kissed upon her hand  
The glowing golden band  
That bound the fine scroll of her life and clasped her simple  
story.

### **His Sweetheart**

Sylvia's lattices were dark —  
Roses made them narrow.  
In the dawn there came a Spark,  
Armed with an arrow:  
Blithe he burst by dewy spray,  
Winged by bud and blossom.  
All undaunted urged his way  
Straight to Sylvia's bosom.  
'Sylvia!' Sylvia! Sylvia!' he  
Like a bee kept humming,  
'Wake, my sweeting; waken thee,  
For thy Soldier's coming!'

Sylvia sleeping in the dawn,  
Dreams that Cupid's trill is  
Roses singing, on the lawn,  
Courting crested lilies.  
Sylvia smiles and Sylvia sleeps,  
Sylvia weeps and slumbers;  
Cupid to her pink ear creeps,  
Pipes his pretty numbers.  
Sylvia dreams that bugles play,  
Hears a martial drumming;  
Sylvia springs to meet the day  
With her Soldier coming.  
Happy Sylvia, on thee wait  
All the gracious graces!  
Venus mild her cestus plait  
Round thy lawns and laces!  
Flora fling a flower most fair,  
Hope a rainbow lend thee!  
All the nymphs to Cupid dear  
On this day befriend thee!  
'Sylvia! Sylvia! Sylvia!' hear  
How he keeps a-humming,  
Laughing in her jewelled ear,  
'Sweet, thy Soldier's coming!'

## ***Poems by Ethelwyn Wetlierald***

### **The Followers**

One day I caught up with my angel, she  
Who calls me bell-like from a sky-touched tower.  
'T was in my roof-room, at the stillest hour  
Of a still, sunless day, when suddenly  
A flood of deep unreasoned ecstasy  
Lifted my heart, that had begun to cower,  
And wrapped it in a flame of living power.  
My leader said, 'Arise and follow me.'  
Then as I followed gladly I beheld  
How all men baffled, burdened, crossed or curst,  
Clutch at an angel's hem, if near or far;  
One not-to-be-resisted voice, deep-belled.  
Speaks to them, and of those we call the worst,  
Lo, each poor blackened brow strains to a Star!

### **The Wind of Death**

The wind of death, that softly blows  
The last warm petal from the rose.  
The last dry leaf from off the tree,  
To-nig'ht has come to breathe on me.  
There was a time I learned to hate



As weaker mortals learn to love  
;  
The passion held me fixed as fate.  
Burned in my veins early and late;  
But now a wind falls from above —  
The wind of death, that silently  
Enshroudeth friend and enemy.  
There was a time my soul was thrilled  
By keen ambition's whip and spur;  
My master forced me where he willed.  
And with his power my life was filled;  
But now the old-time pulses stir  
How faintly in the wind of death,  
That bloweth lightly as a breath.  
And once, but once, at Love's dear feet  
I yielded strength and life and heart;  
His look turned bitter into sweet,  
His smile made all the world complete;  
The wind blows loves like leaves apart —  
The wind of death, that tenderly  
Is blowing 'twixt my love and me.  
O wind of death, that darkly blows  
Each separate ship of human woes  
Far out on a mysterious sea,  
I turn, I turn my face to thee!

## **Prodigal Yet**

Muck of the sty, reek of the trough,  
Blackened my brow where all might see.  
Yet while I was a great way off  
My Father ran with compassion for me.  
He put on my hand a ring of gold,  
(There's no escape from a ring, they say)  
He put on my neck a chain to hold  
My passionate spirit from breaking away.  
He put on my feet the shoes that miss  
No chance to tread in the narrow path;  
He pressed on my lips the burning kiss  
That scorches deeper than fires of wrath.  
He filled my body with meat and wine.  
He flooded my heart with love's white light;  
Yet deep in the mire, with sensual swine,  
I long—God help me!— to wallow to-night.  
Muck of the sty, reek of the trough.  
Blacken my soul where none may see.  
Father, I yet am a long way off—  
Come quickly. Lord! Have compassion on me!

## Poetry

***If Only They Knew by Aki Kurosawa***

I wished I knew  
what turned boys off  
because I know what  
turns them on.

Beer and baseball,  
yes that's a Japanese thing!  
manga with  
too much exposed

School girls in their  
short skirts  
taking the subway  
with their panties  
showing as they hang  
tight to their school books  
with one arm and  
to the strap overhead  
with the other.

There was a time when  
I too struggled  
there in the subway  
and had tubby

sweating boys,  
try to film me up skirt/

If only they knew  
what turned me on  
then I would have  
given them for free  
what they tried to  
steal from me

If they had carried  
my books – they would  
not have needed their manga.

## ***What Loneliness Is by Patrick Bruskiewich***

Loneliness is walking in the  
Shadows of the Cherry  
Blossoms and having no one to  
Share the moment with.

Loneliness is seeing how pink  
And beautiful they are  
And being reminded of the  
Wonders of the woman you love.

Loneliness is watching the  
Cherry Blossoms dance  
Through space and time reminding  
You each moment is fleeting.

Loneliness is walking alone  
Along the boulevards of life and  
Realizing no one presses close to  
your arm to ask ... Do you love me?

***Pictorial: Something Biblical ...***



## ***The Big Apple is Back! by William Webster***

The Big Apple is back!  
We have rid ourselves  
of pest and pestilence  
The air is ... well ...  
Not so heavy anymore,  
And our streets will  
perhaps ... never be  
the same as I remember  
then from a few years back,  
but now what we have  
to watch out for are  
wild taxis drivers  
and their NY fares,  
the trucker drinking his beer  
as he delivers his ware  
the j's who walk across  
the street unawares.

We no longer have to  
cur-trump across town  
nor dodge the ambulances  
speeding their way to poxy

Yes, the Big Apple is Great Again!



We have all made it so.

The same way it came back in 1922

After *el grand plagio espaniol*

Perhaps we will go crazy again and roar

A few years before the next great crash.

***If you are a dandelion by Rose Lang***

If you are a dandelion  
Among the daffodils  
You might not be noticed

But ...

If you are a dandelion  
Among the roses  
You might be plucked!

If you are a dandelion  
Among the weeds  
You might be welcomed

But ...

If you are a dandelion  
Among the flowers  
They will push you out!

## Mathematics and Science

## ***Returning to the Moon with a Modern LEM by Patrick Bruskiewich***

### **The Artemis Project**

The Artemis Project is a follow up to the earlier Apollo Program which saw humans visit the surface of the moon in the later 1960's and early 1970's. The launch vehicle for Artemis is the SLS which extensively reuses Space Shuttle technology such as the RS-25 rocket motors, the cryogenic main tank technology as well as the solid rocket boosters. Following the same philosophy it is recommended that an improved version of the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM) design from Project Apollo be design-built reusing the original design but modern lightweight materials and modern electronics to land the first Artemis crews onto the Lunar Surface. If such a design-built is started in 2023 a LEM could be ready for lunar landings by 2028.

### **The Orion Capsule**

When the Orion capsule was being design-built the technology developed for the crew capsule from Apollo was modernized.<sup>1</sup> In 2014 an unmanned Orion capsule was sent into LEO for a first validation.<sup>2</sup> In late 2022 as part of Artemis -1 the Orion capsule was sent on a flight to the moon and back for a second validation. The Orion Capsule has the same shape as the Apollo capsule but is larger, designed to accommodate twice as many astronauts and more cargo than the Apollo Capsule.

| Spacecraft | Max Crew<br>Size | Full Mass<br>(kg) | Volume (m <sup>3</sup> ) |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Apollo     | 3                | 5,560             | 10.4                     |
| Artemis    | 6                | 10,400            | 20                       |

**Table 1: Comparison of Apollo and Orion Spacecraft**

### **The Space Launch System**

Apollo was launched to the moon using the Saturn V launch vehicle. The Saturn V was used from 1968 to 1973. <sup>3</sup>

The *Space Launch System* was design-built using the philosophy that the RS-25 rocket motors, their cryogenic fuel tanks and solid rocket booster technology from the very successful Space Shuttle program could be updated and re-tasked into a powerful booster for lunar and mars exploration.<sup>4</sup> Development of the SLS was begun in 2011 the same year the Space Shuttle was retired. It took eleven years to ready SLS for its first flight in 2022. The SLS is more capable than the Saturn V.

The first launch of the SLS in November 2022 was a full up test of the launch system as well as the command and service module. This mission was designated Artemis -1 and was an un-crewed mission to and from the moon. The first launch of the SLS used four recycled RS-25 motors that had previously been used to launch previous Space Shuttle missions to LEO. The Artemis-1 flight was a complete success.

The design-build of the SLS using reliable Space Shuttle technology was a wise decision and has produced the most powerful launcher ever built.

| Spacecraft | First Stage<br>Motors | Launch Mass<br>(kg) | Mass to Moon<br>(kg) |
|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Saturn V   | 5                     | 2,965,000           | 43,500               |
| SLS        | 4                     | 2,700,000           | 46,000<br>(future)   |

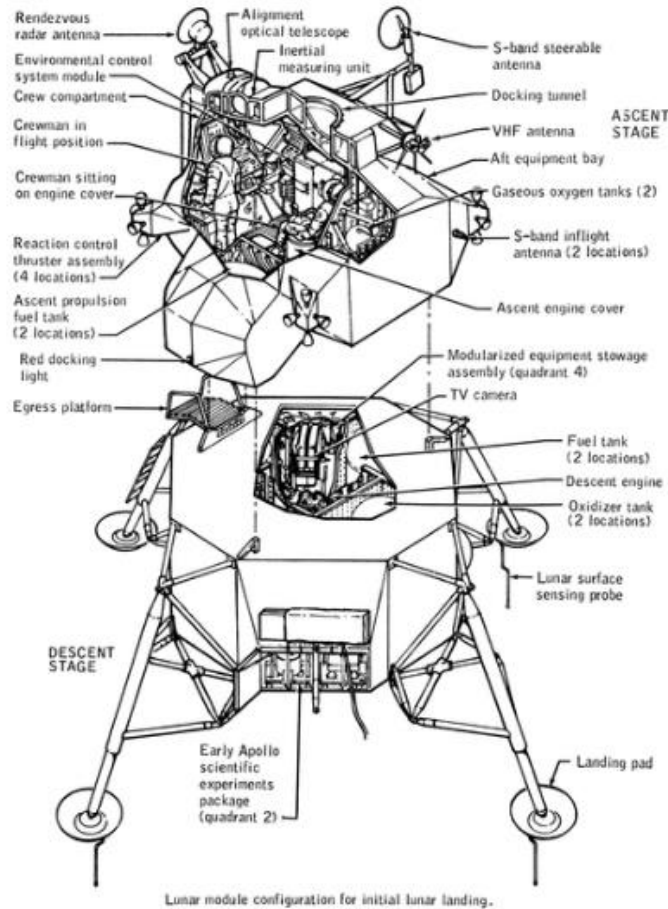
**Table 2: Comparison of Saturn V and Space Launch System**

You will note the use of modern materials and electronic has reduced the mass of the SLS compared to the Saturn V, and has increased the payload to the moon.

### **The Apollo LEM**

The Apollo moon landings were made possible by the decision to use the Lunar Orbit Rendezvous approach as recommended by Dr. John Houbolt of NASA. The Apollo Command and Service Module (CSM) with one astronaut remained in lunar orbit while the Lunar Excursion Module (the LEM) with two astronauts was landed on the moon. After the completed landing the ascent stage of the LEM rendezvoused with the CSM in lunar orbit and then the three astronauts returned to Earth.

The LEM was a two stage vehicle with a lower stage, the descent stage, and an upper stage, the ascent stage. <sup>3</sup> After landing on the lunar surface, the descent stage acted as the launch platform for the ascent stage (refer to Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1: The Ascent and Descent Stage of the Apollo LEM**

The rocket motors used storable hypergolic propellants that ignited upon mixing. The rocket motors were throttleable and were re-lightable.

As a habitat the LEM had batteries with finite lifetimes as well as consumables like oxygen and water and had a maximum lunar surface time of around 125 to 150 hours. A later version of the LEM brought an electric vehicle to the moon, the lunar rover, which extended to area over which the two astronauts could explore.

The next SLS launch and the Artemis – 2 missions is scheduled for late 2024 or early 2025. While efforts are underway to build a new lunar landing system, it appears that the timeline for completion and validation of these new systems places a NASA manned landing on the moon sometime in 2030.

In 1972 three of the last Apollo missions were cancelled by the Nixon Administration for financial reasons and as a result there are three LEM vehicles that were built and are now on extended loan at museums in the United States.

It is recommended these three LEM systems be returned to NASA, disassembled and assayed as to their flight worthiness. Perhaps the descent stage systems are flight worthy. Perhaps both NASA and Grumman can dust off their as-built drawings for the LEM and undertake a modernization using modern materials and electronics. Perhaps a refurbished unmanned LEM can be launched for a landing on the moon in 2026. These systems can either reuse the existing hypergolic rocket motors or use new cryogenic motors instead (eg. RS -18). This could be a lunar habitat test bed.



Perhaps a new and modernized, crewed two man LEM could be ready for a lunar landing by early 2028. This system could be built from scratch. At the very least, a modernized LEM, with only a descent stage, could serve as an unmanned landing system for provisioning of consumables, as well as a habitable structure. The modernized LEM could be powered with photovoltaic cells and batteries. Crewed LEMS could be used as safety and service vehicles for a lunar habitat.

Building a dozen modernized LEMS should be possible for around \$ 2.5 billion in 2023 dollars. The LEM worked very well and so it would be a wise decision to reuse a modernized version of this system as a first step in the eventual habitation of the moon. It is a good philosophy to reuse technology that has already been validated.

### **References:**

- 1)) Refer to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo\\_command\\_and\\_service\\_module](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_command_and_service_module)
- 2)) Refer to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orion\\_\(spacecraft\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orion_(spacecraft))
- 3)) Refer to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturn\\_V](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturn_V)
- 4)) Refer to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space\\_Launch\\_System](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Launch_System)
- 5)) Refer to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo\\_Lunar\\_Module](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_Lunar_Module)

## History

## ***Fearing God and Nothing Else by Winston Churchill***

MIT Mid-Century Convocation, March 31, 1949

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston, Massachusetts

I am honoured by your wish that I should take part in the discussions of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. We have suffered in Great Britain by the lack of colleges of University rank in which engineering and the allied subjects are taught. Industrial production depends on technology and it is because the Americans, like the prewar Germans, have realized this and created institutions for the advanced training of large numbers of high-grade engineers to translate the advances of pure science into industrial technique, that their output per head and consequent standard of life are so high. It is surprising that England, which was the first country to be industrialized, has nothing of comparable stature. If tonight I strike other notes than those of material progress, it implies no want of admiration for all the work you have done and are doing. My aim, like yours, is to be guided by balance and proportion.

The outstanding feature of the Twentieth Century has been the enormous expansion in the numbers who are given the opportunity to share in the larger and more varied life which in previous periods was reserved for the few and for the very few. This process must continue and we trust at an increasing rate. If we are to bring the broad masses of the people in every land to the table of abundance, it can only be by the tireless improvement of all our means of technical production, and by the diffusion in every form of education of an

improved quality to scores of millions of men and women. Even in this darkling hour I have faith that this will go on.

I rejoice in Tennyson's lines:-

*"Men, my brothers, men, the workers, even reaping something new;  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do."*

I was however a little disquieted that you find it necessary to debate the question, to quote Dr. Burchard's opening address, "Whether the problem of world production yielding at least a minimum living to the whole population can be solved, and whether man has so destroyed the resources of his world that he may be doomed to die of starvation." If, with all the resources of modern science, we find ourselves unable to avert world famine, we shall all be to blame, but a peculiar responsibility would rest upon the scientists. I do not believe they will fail, but if they do, or were not allowed to succeed, the consequences would be very unpleasant because it is certain that mankind would not agree to starve equally, and there might be some very sharp disagreements about how the last crust was to be shared. This would simplify our problem in an unduly primordial manner.

I feel somewhat overawed in addressing this vast scientific and learned audience on the subjects which your Panels are discussing. I have no technical and no university education, and have just had to pick up a few things as I went along. Therefore I speak with a diffidence, which I hope to overcome as I proceed, on these profound scientific, social and philosophic issues, each of

which claims a life-long study for itself, and are now to be examined, as schoolmen would say, not only in their integrity but in their relationship, meaning thereby not only one by one but all together.

I was so glad that in the first instance you asked me to talk about the past rather than to peer into the future because I know more about the past than I do about the future, and I was well content that the President of the United States, whose gift of prophecy was so remarkably vindicated by recent electoral results, should have accepted that task. We all regret that his heavy state duties prevent him from being here tonight. I shall therefore presently have to do a little of the peering myself.

For us in Britain the Nineteenth Century ended amid the glories of the Victorian era, and we entered upon the dawn of the Twentieth in high hope for our country, our Empire and the world. The latter and larger part of the Nineteenth Century had been the period of liberal advance (liberal with a small 'l' please). In 1900 a sense of moving hopefully forward to brighter, broader and easier days was predominant. Little did we guess that what has been called the Century of the Common Man would witness as its outstanding feature more common men killing each other with greater facilities than any other five centuries together in the history of the world. But we entered this terrible Twentieth Century with confidence. We thought that with improving transportation nations would get to know each other better. We believed that as they got to know each other better they would like each other more, and that national rivalries would fade in a growing international consciousness. We took it almost for granted that science would confer continual boons and

blessings upon us, would give us better meals, better garments and better dwellings for less trouble, and thus steadily shorten the hours of labour and leave more time for play, and culture. In the name of ordered but unceasing progress, we saluted the Age of Democracy expressing itself ever more widely through Parliaments freely and fairly elected on a broad or universal franchise. We saw no reason why men and women should not shape their own home life and careers without being cramped by the growing complexity of the State, which was to be their servant and the protector of their rights. You had the famous American maxim "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," and we both noticed that the world was divided into peoples that owned the Governments and Governments that owned the peoples. At least I heard all this around that time and liked some of it very much.

I was a Minister in the British Liberal Government (large "L" please), returned with a great majority in 1906. That new Liberal Government arrived in power with much of its message already delivered and most of its aims already achieved. The days of hereditary aristocratic privilege were ended or numbered. The path was opened for talent in every field of endeavour. Primary education was compulsory, universal and free, or was about to become so. New problems arising from former successes awaited the new Administration. The independence of the proletariat from thralldom involved at least a minimum standard of life and labour and security for old age, sickness, and the death of the family breadwinner. It was to these tasks of social reform and insurance that we addressed ourselves. The name of Lloyd George will ever be associated in Great Britain with this new departure. I am

proud to have been his Lieutenant in this work and also as a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer and later as head of the wartime National Coalition to have carried these same themes further forward on a magnified scale.

Science presently placed novel and dangerous facilities in the hands of the most powerful countries. Humanity was informed that it could make machines that would fly through the air and vessels which could swim beneath the surface of the seas. The conquest of the air and the perfection of the art of flying fulfilled the dream which for thousands of years had glittered in human imagination. Certainly it was a marvellous and romantic event. Whether the bestowal of this gift upon an immature civilization composed of competing nations whose nationalism grew with every advance of democracy and who were as yet devoid of international organization, was a blessing or a curse has yet to be proved. On the whole I remain an optimist. For good or ill Air mastery is today the supreme expression of military power, and fleets and armies, however necessary, must accept a subordinate rank. This is a memorable milestone in the march of man.

The submarine, to do it justice, has never made any claim to be a blessing or even a convenience. I well remember when it became an accomplished military fact of peculiar significance to the British Isles and the British Navy, there was a general belief even in the Admiralty where I presided, that no nation would ever be so wicked as to use these under-water vessels to sink merchantmen at sea. How could a submarine, it was asked, provide for the safety of the crews of the merchant ships it sank? Public opinion was shocked

when old Admiral Fisher bluntly declared that this would be no bar to their being used by the new and growing German Navy in a most ruthless manner. His prediction was certainly not stultified by what was soon to happen.

Here then we have these two novel and potent weapons placed in the hands of highly nationalized sovereign States in the early part of the Twentieth Century, and both of them dwell with us today for our future edification.

A third unmeasured sphere opened to us as the years passed, which, for the sake of comprehensive brevity, I will describe as Radar. This Radar, with its innumerable variants and possibilities, has so far been the handmaiden of the air, but it has also been the enemy of the submarine and in alliance with the air may well prove its exterminator.

In the first half of the Twentieth Century, fanned by the crimson wings of war, the conquest of the air affected profoundly human affairs. It made the globe seem much bigger to the mind and much smaller to the body. The human biped was able to travel about far more quickly. This greatly reduced the size of his estate, while at the same time creating an even keener sense of its exploitable value. In the Nineteenth Century Jules Verne wrote "Round the World in Eighty Days". It seemed a prodigy. Now you can get round it in four; but you do not see much of it on the way. The whole prospect and outlook of mankind grew immeasurably larger, and the multiplication of ideas also proceeded at an incredible rate. This vast expansion was unhappily not accompanied by any noticeable advance in the stature of man, either in his mental faculties, or his moral character. His brain got no better, but it buzzed



more. The scale of events around him assumed gigantic proportions while he remained about the same size.

By comparison therefore he actually became much smaller. We no longer had great men directing manageable affairs. The need was to discipline an array of gigantic and turbulent facts. To this task we have certainly so far proved unequal. Science bestowed immense new powers on man and at the same time created conditions which were largely beyond his comprehension and still more beyond his control. While he nursed the illusion of growing mastery and exulted in his new trappings, he became the sport and presently the victim of tides, and currents, of whirlpools and tornadoes amid which he was far more helpless than he had been for a long time.

Hopeful developments in many directions were proceeding in 1914 on both sides of the Atlantic and seemed to point to an age of Peace and Plenty when suddenly violent events broke in upon them. For more than forty years there had been no major war in Europe. Indeed since the Civil War in the United States, there had been no great struggle in the West. A spirit of adventure stirred the minds of men and was by no means allayed by the general advance of prosperity and science. On the contrary prosperity meant power, and science offered weapons. We read in the Bible "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." For several generations Britannia had ruled the waves - for long periods at less cost annually than that of a single modern battleship.

History, will say that this great trust was not abused. American testimony about the early period of the Monroe Doctrine is upon record. There was the

suppression of the Slave Trade. During our prolonged period of naval supremacy undeterred by the rise of foreign tariffs, we opened our ports freely to the commerce of the world. Our Colonial and oriental empire, even our coastal trade, was free to the shipping of all the nations on equal terms. We in no way sought to obstruct the rise of other States or Navies. For nearly the whole of the Nineteenth Century the monopoly of sea power in British hands was a trust discharged faithfully in the general interest. But now in the first decade of the Twentieth Century with new patterns of warships, naval rivalries became acute and fierce. Civilized Governments began to think in Dreadnoughts. It would in such a setting have been very difficult to prevent the First World War.

There was of course one way - one way then as now - the creation of an international instrument, strong enough to adjust the disputes of nations and enforce its decisions against an aggressor. Much wisdom, eloquence and earnest effort was devoted to this theme in which the United States took the lead, but we only got as far as the World Court at the Hague and improvements in the Geneva Convention. The impulses towards a trial of strength in Europe were the stronger. Germany, demanding her 'place in the sun', was faced by a resolute France with her military honour to regain. England, in accordance with her foreign policy of three hundred years, sustained the weaker side. France found an ally in the Russia of the Czars and Germany in the crumbling Empire of the Hapsburgs. The United States, for reasons which were natural and traditional, but no longer so valid as in the past, stood aloof and expected to be able to watch as a spectator, the thrilling, fearful drama unfold from

across what was then called "the broad Atlantic." These expectations were not borne out by what happened.

High hopes and spacious opportunities awaited the victorious allies when they assembled at Versailles after four and a half years of hideous mechanical slaughter, illuminated by infinite sacrifice, but not remarkably relieved by strategy or generalship. War, stripped of every pretention of glamour or romance had been brought home to the masses of the peoples in forms never before experienced except by the defeated. To stop another war was the supreme object and duty of the statesmen who met as friends and allies around the Peace Table. They made great errors. The doctrine of self-determination was not the remedy for Europe, which needed above all things, unity and larger groupings. The idea that the vanquished could pay the expenses of the victors was a destructive and crazy delusion. The failure to strangle Bolshevism at its birth and to bring Russia, then prostrate, by one means or another, into the general democratic system lies heavy upon us today. Nevertheless the statesmen at Versailles, largely at the inspiration of President Wilson, an inspiration implemented effectively by British thought, created the League of Nations. This is their defense before history, and had the League been resolutely sustained and used, it would have saved us all.

This was not to be. Another ordeal even more appalling than the first lay before us. Even when so much else had failed we could have obtained a prolonged peace, lasting all our lives at least, simply by keeping Germany disarmed in accordance with the Treaty, and by treating her with justice and magnanimity. This latter condition was very nearly achieved at Locarno in

1928, but the failure to enforce the disarmament clauses and above all to sustain the League of Nations, both of which purposes could easily have been accomplished, brought upon us the Second World War. Once again the English speaking world gloriously but narrowly emerged, bleeding and breathless, but united as we never were before. This unity is our present salvation, because after all our victories, we are now faced by perils, both grave and near, and by problems more dire than have ever confronted Christian civilization, even in this Twentieth Century of storm and change.

There remains however a key of deliverance. It is the same key which was searched for by those who laboured to set up the World Court at the Hague in the early years of the century. It is the same conception as animated President Wilson and his colleagues at Versailles, namely the creation of a world instrument capable at least of giving to all its members Security against Aggression. The United Nations Organization which has been erected under the inspiring leadership of my great wartime friend, President Roosevelt, in place of the former League, has so far been rent and distracted by the antagonism of Soviet Russia and by the fundamental schism which has opened between Communism and the rest of mankind. But we must not despair. We must persevere, and if the gulf continues to widen, we must make sure that the cause of Freedom is defended by all the resources of combined forethought and superior science. Here lies the best hope of averting a third world struggle, and a sure means of coming through it without being enslaved or destroyed.

One of the questions which we are debating here is defined as "the failure of social and political institutions to keep pace with material and technical

change." Scientists should never underrate the deep-seated qualities of human nature and how, repressed in one direction they will certainly break out in another. The genus homo if I may display my Latin - is a tough creature who has travelled here by a very long road. His nature has been shaped and his virtues ingrained by many millions of years of struggle, fear and pain, and his spirit has, from the earliest dawn of history, shown itself upon occasion capable of mounting to the sublime, far above material conditions or mortal terrors. He still remains as Pope described him two hundred years ago:

*"Placed on this Isthmus of a middle State  
A being darkly wise and rudely great  
Created half to rise and half to fall  
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all.  
Sole Judge of truth in endless error hurled,  
The glory, jest and riddle of the world."*

In his Introductory address, Dr. Burchard, the Dean of Humanities, spoke with awe of "an approaching scientific ability to control men's thoughts with precision." I shall be very content if my task in this world is done before that happens. Laws just or unjust may govern men's actions. Tyrannies may restrain or regulate their words. The machinery of propaganda may pack their minds with falsehood and deny them truth for many generations of time. But the soul of man thus held in trance or frozen in a long night can be awakened by a spark coming from God knows where and in a moment the whole structure of lies and oppression is on trial for its life. Peoples in bondage should never despair. Science no doubt could if sufficiently perverted

exterminate us all but it is not in the power of material forces in any period which the youngest here tonight need take into practical account, to alter the main elements in human nature or restrict the infinite variety of forms in which the soul and genius of the human race can and will express itself.

How right you are in this great Institution of technical study and achievement to keep a Dean of Humanities and give him so commanding a part to play in your discussions! No technical knowledge can outweigh knowledge of the humanities in the gaining of which philosophy and history walk hand in hand. Our inheritance of well-founded slowly conceived codes of honour, morals and manners, the passionate convictions which so many hundreds of millions share together of the principles of freedom and justice, are far more precious to us than anything which scientific discoveries could bestow. Those whose minds are attracted or compelled to rigid and symmetrical systems of government should remember that logic, like science, must be the servant and not the master of man. Human beings and human societies are not structures that are built or machines that are forged. They are plants that grow and must be tended as such. Life is a test and this world a place of trial. Always the problems or it may be the same problem will be presented to every generation in different forms. The problems of victory may be even more baffling than those of defeat. However much the conditions change, the supreme question is how we live and grow and bloom and die, and how far each life conforms to standards which are not wholly related to space or time.

Here I speak not only to those who enjoy the blessings and consolation of revealed religion but also to those who face the mysteries of human destiny

alone. The flame of Christian ethics is still our highest guide. To guard and cherish it is our first interest, both spiritually and materially. The fulfilment of Spiritual duty in our daily life is vital to our survival. Only by bringing it into perfect application can we hope to solve for ourselves the problems of this world and not of this world alone.

I cannot speak to you here tonight without expressing to the United States - as I have perhaps some right to do - the thanks of Britain and of Europe for the splendid part America is playing in the world. Many nations have risen to the summit of human affairs, but here is a great example where new-won supremacy has not been used for self-aggrandisement but only for further sacrifice.

Three years ago I spoke at Fulton under the auspices of President Truman. Many people here and in my own country were startled and even shocked by what I said. But events have vindicated and fulfilled in much detail the warnings which I deemed it my duty to give at that time.

Today there is a very different climate of opinion. I am in cordial accord with much that is being done. We have, as dominating facts, the famous Marshall Aid, the new unity in Western Europe and now the Atlantic Pact. How has this tremendous change in our outlook and policy been accomplished? The responsible Ministers in all the countries concerned deserve high credit. There is credit enough for all. In my own country the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Bevin, who has come here to sign the Atlantic Pact, has shown himself indifferent to mere party popularity in dealing with these great national issues. He has

shown himself, like many American public men, above mere partisan interest in dealing with these national and world issues. No one could however have brought about these immense changes in the feeling of the United States, Great Britain and Europe but for the astounding policy of the Russian Soviet Government. We may well ask, "Why have they deliberately acted so as to unite the free world against them?" It is certainly not because there are not very able men among them. Why have they done it? I offer you my own answer to this strange conundrum. It is because they fear the friendship of the West more than its hostility. They cannot afford to allow free and friendly intercourse to grow up between the vast area they control and the civilization of the West. The Russian people must not see what goes on outside, and the world must not see what goes on inside the Soviet domain. Fourteen men in the Kremlin, holding down hundreds of millions of people and aiming at the rule of the world feel that at all costs they must keep up the barriers. Self-preservation, not for Russia but for themselves, lies at the root and is the explanation of their sinister and malignant policy.

In consequence of the Soviet conduct the relations of Communist Russia with the other great powers of the world are without precedent in history. Measures and counter-measures have been taken on many occasions which in any previous period could only have meant armed conflict. The situation has been well described by distinguished Americans as the "cold war." And the question is asked "Are we winning the cold war?" This cannot be decided by looking at Europe alone. We must also look to Asia. The worst disaster since our victory has been the collapse of China under Communist attack and intrigue. China, in which the United States have always taken a high interest,



comprises an immense part of the population of the world. The absorption of China and India into the Kremlin-controlled Communist Empire, would certainly bring measureless bloodshed and misery to eight or nine hundred million people.

On the other hand, the position in Europe has so far been successfully maintained. The prodigious effort of the Berlin Air Lift has carried us through the winter. Time, though dearly-bought, has been gained for peace. The efficiency of the American and British Air Forces has been proved and improved. Most of all the spectacle of the British and Americans trying to feed the two million Germans in Berlin, while the Soviet Government was trying to starve them, has been an object lesson to the German people far beyond anything that words could convey. I trust that small and needless provocations of German sentiment may be avoided by the Western Powers. The revival and union of Europe cannot be achieved without the earnest and freely given aid of the German people.

The Air Lift has fully justified itself. Nevertheless, fear and its shadows brood over Western Europe today. A month ago in Brussels I spoke to a meeting of 30,000 Belgians. I could feel at once their friendship and their anxiety. They have no Atlantic Ocean, no English Channel, between them and the Russian Communist armoured divisions. Yet they bravely and ardently support the cause of United Europe. I was also conscious of the hope and faith which they, like the Greek people, place in the United States.

We are now confronted with something quite as wicked but in some ways more formidable than Hitler, because Hitler had only the Herrenvolk pride and anti-Semitic hatred to exploit. He had no fundamental theme. But these fourteen men in the Kremlin have their hierarchy and a church of Communist adepts, whose missionaries are in every country as a Fifth Column, awaiting the day when they hope to be the absolute masters of their fellow-countrymen and pay off old scores. They have their anti-God religion and their Communist doctrine of the entire subjugation of the individual to the State. Behind this stands the largest Army in the world, in the hands of a Government pursuing Imperialist expansion, as no Czar or Kaiser had ever done.

I must not conceal from you the truth as I see it. It is certain that Europe would have been communized and London under bombardment some time ago but for the deterrent of the Atomic Bomb in the hands of the United States.

Another question is also asked. Is time on our side? That is not a question that can be answered except within strict limits. We have certainly not an unlimited period of time before a settlement should be achieved. The utmost vigilance should be practised but I do not think myself that violent or precipitate action should be taken now. War is not inevitable. The Germans have a wise saying, "The trees do not grow up to the sky." Often something happens to turn or mitigate the course of events. Four or five hundred years ago Europe seemed about to be conquered by the Mongols. Two great battles were fought almost on the same day near Vienna and in Poland. In both of these the chivalry and armed power of Europe was completely shattered by the Asiatic hordes. It seemed that nothing could avert the doom of the famous

Continent from which modern civilization and culture have spread throughout the world. But at the critical moment the Great Khan died. The succession was vacant, and the Mongol armies and their leaders trooped back on their ponies across the seven thousand miles which separated them from their capital in order to choose a successor. They never returned till now.

We need not abandon hope or patience. Many favorable processes are on foot. Under the impact of Communism all the free nations are being welded together as they never have been before and never could be, but for the harsh external pressure to which they are being subjected. We have no hostility to the Russian people and no desire to deny them their legitimate rights and security. I hoped that Russia, after the war, would have access, through unfrozen waters, into every ocean, guaranteed by the World Organization of which she would be a leading member; that she should have the freest access, which indeed she has at the present time, to raw materials of every kind; and that the Russians everywhere would be received as brothers in the human family. That still remains our aim and ideal. We seek nothing from Russia but goodwill and fair play. If, however, there is to be a war of nerves, let us make sure our nerves are strong and are fortified by the deepest convictions of our hearts. If we persevere steadfastly together, and allow no appeasement of tyranny and wrong-doing in any form, it may not be our nerve or the structure of our civilization which will break, and peace may yet be preserved.

This is a hard experience in the life of the world. After our great victory, which we believed would decide the struggle for freedom for our time at least, we thought we had deserved better of fortune. But unities and associations are

being established by many nations throughout the free world with a speed and reality which would not have been achieved perhaps for generations. Of all these unities the one most precious to me is the fraternal association between the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States. Do not underrate the strength of Britain. As I said at Fulton, "Do not suppose that half a century from now you will not see seventy or eighty millions of Britons spread about the world and united in defence of our traditions, our way of life, and the world causes which you and we espouse." United we stand secure.

Let us then move forward together in discharge of our mission and our duty,

*fearing God and nothing else.*

## Art

## ***Our Splendid Minotaur by Reiko***

[**Vancouver**] For the past two years I was in Vancouver taking courses and studying to improve my English. Lucky for me I was able to share an apartment with three of my high school friends – my older sister Keiko, an older friend Yuki and my friend Aki. While we were living in Vancouver we met many interesting and kind friends. We are all now back in Japan.

It was Yuki who introduced us to the Minotaur. She had met him at the Main Branch of the Vancouver Public Library. He was sitting reading an interesting book about Pablo Picasso and Minotaur art. Yuki struck up a conversation with him and they discussed Pablo Picasso (Yuki's favorite artist). That very afternoon Yuki invited him to join the four of us for dinner. It was over dinner that he told us that he sometimes sits for his artist friends when they want to do art. We asked if he would sit for us. Over the next six months all four of us did art with him. Yuki even did a very unique university project with him!

Since I cannot draw or paint or sculpt very well he let me take photographs of him as a Minotaur. What struck me as being very special is that he is very shy ... when I finally convinced him to take off his loin cloth, he would not let me photograph him ... completely. It was only when I set the camera down that he became less modest.

Let me tell you he is our splendid Minotaur!









In return for letting me photograph him I asked him to photograph me. He said he would take only one picture. What he suggested was very unique. He asked me to blindfold myself and then take off my kimono then he took a single picture of me with my cellphone. *“This picture is just for you”* he said.



I have decided to share with you the beautiful picture he took of me.

## ***Phallus Anthropologia by Yuki***

[Japan] Last year I was taking third and fourth year humanities courses at a university back in Vancouver. I am the first person in my family to ever go to university. My program required me to take an anthropology course. I had never studied anthropology before and so I did not have the prerequisites for most of the courses, but there was one course that the instructor let me take (there were a dozen open seats and so she wanted to fill the class). It was a class for students with majors other than anthropology.

There was a large amount of reading for the course and I had to write several long research papers. A Canadian friend helped edit my papers (writing in English is very difficult for me). There was also an hour long seminar I had to present. I chose as a theme *Phallus Anthropologia* – the Anthropology of the Male because I wanted to better understand the psychology and physiology of the male. I have an artist friend who reluctantly agreed to be a living sculpture for my seminar. It took me much persuasion!

At the heart of my presentation *Phallus Anthropologia* is the modesty and fidelity that men show the women they love and admire in several cultures around the world, both ancient and modern. At the time I knew that my ex-boyfriend back home in Japan was being unfaithful to me. My seminar helped put my ex-boyfriend's infidelity into perspective for me.

**Baubles and Beads – tribal custom to hide the masculine away.**



The baubles and beads tells the women in the tribe that the man is spoken for.

### Baubles and Beads – side view



You can't really see anything can you?

## Baubles – the bare minimum



As he walks the baubles swings along with him. It is mesmerizing!

## In the South Pacific – A shells and pearls



There are usually more shells on the belt (we only had one oyster shell).



## **The Koteka – in parts of Borneo, South America and Africa**



The Koteka is meant to hide away the male pheromones so the wild animals he is hunting cannot smell him when he stalks his prey. The women of the tribe cannot go hunting with their men because their feminine pheromones would be smelled by the wild animals and the women would become the prey.



Here is a Zoe tribesman with his masculinity pulled upwards and prepuce tied.



which is another way of masking the masculine pheromones. My friend was too modest to let me photograph him attired this way.

## The Kynodesme in Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome

The kynodesme is a small piece of string tied around the prepuce, or fore skin, of the male so that his masculinity is hidden away. In ancient times a man could appear in public if he wore a kynodesme. Kynodesme were worn by slaves, athletes and warriors when in public view.



What we discovered is that when a man wears a kynodesme for even a few minutes it puts his masculinity asleep.



This could explain why the sculptures from Greek and Roman times have men with small masculinity.

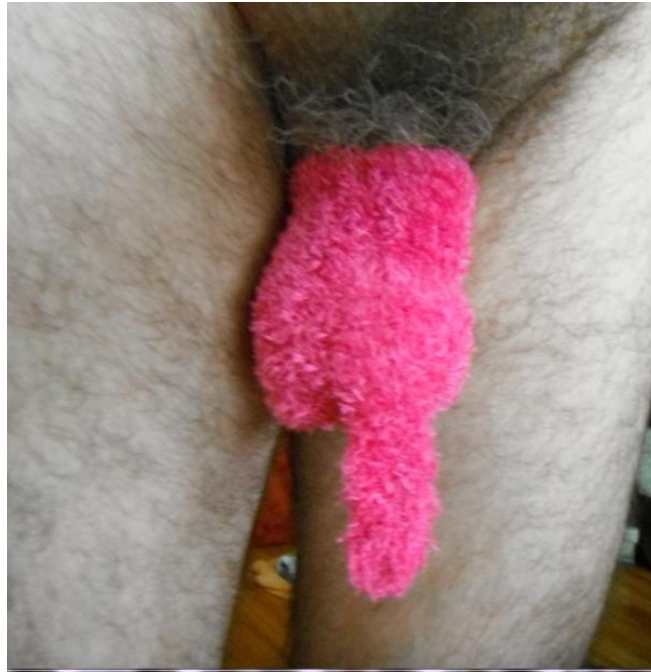


This is the famous sculpture of the Roman Spearman.



Notice how small they both are!

One of the more amusing ornaments is this one.



The other ornaments are a bit too revealing to share as pictures.

Thanks to my friend, I was the only student to receive a perfect mark for their anthropology seminar.

My professor was so impressed with my presentation that she wrote a letter of reference for me for Oxford asking they accept me for a Master's.

A final thought ... each year there is a special Japanese Festival – a celebration of the phallus. When I mentioned this the women in my anthropology class divided in two, some who were fascinated and some who were disgusted. I asked them what they thought and was amused by some of their comments.

I find it odd in Canada that ‘gender studies’ only focussed on women issues or gay issues. I think Canadian universities should have classes about heterosexual men. As a woman I find women studies rather boring!

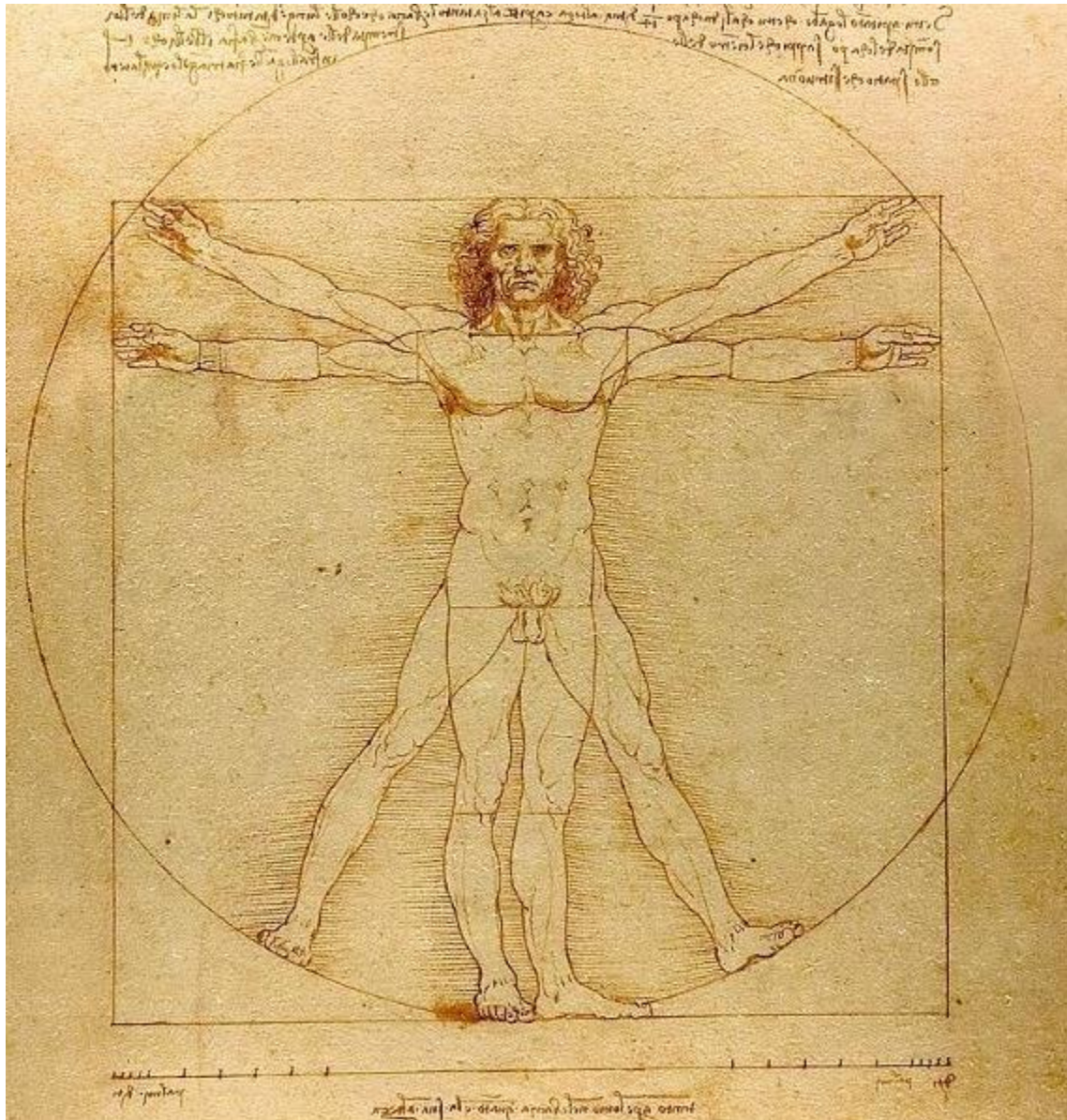


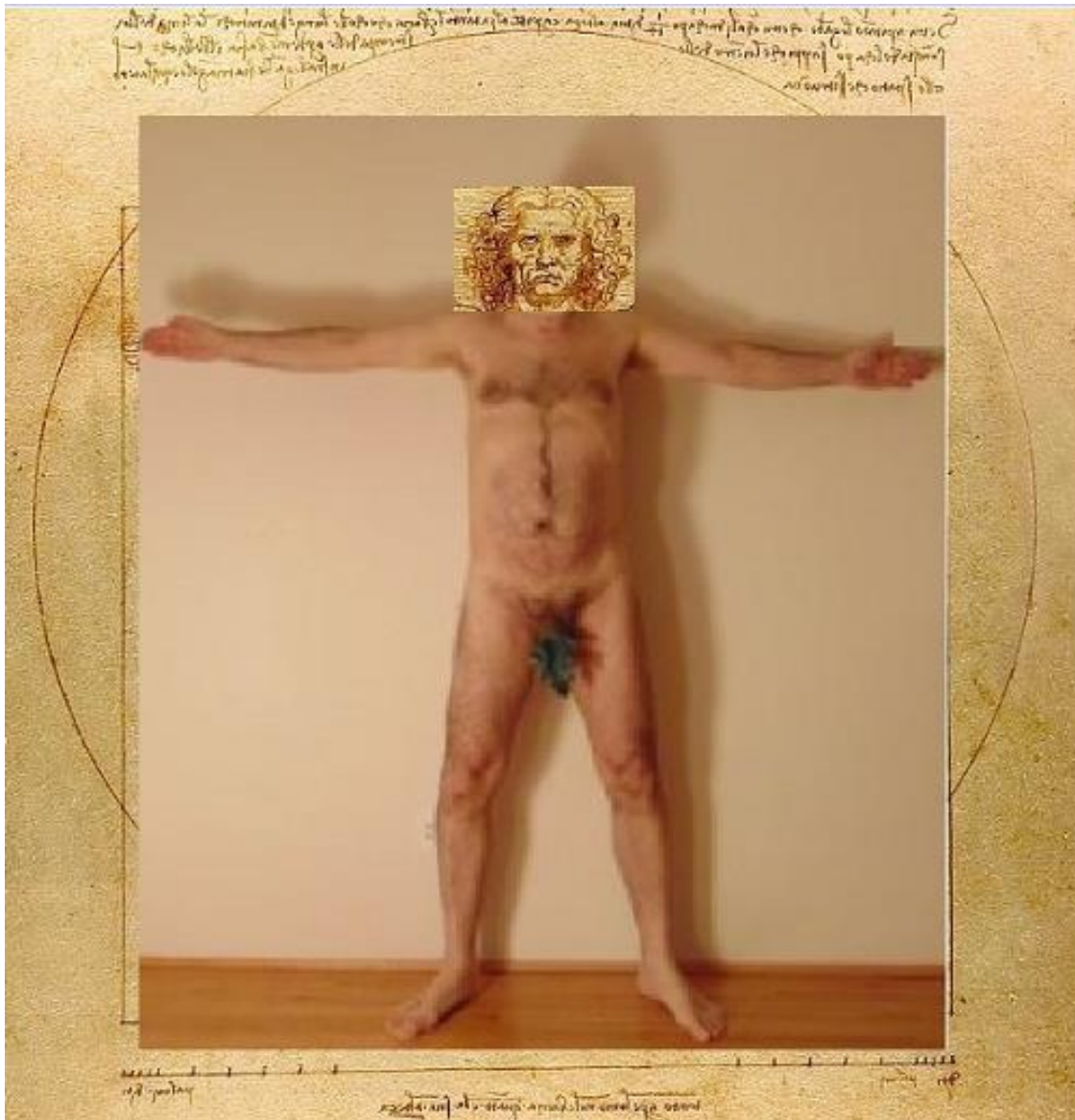
By the way... the porters of this phallus are all women. This year all four of us, me, Keiko, Reiko and Aki participated in this festival for the first time ... we had fun being porters ...

Perhaps Vancouver could have a festival like this next year?

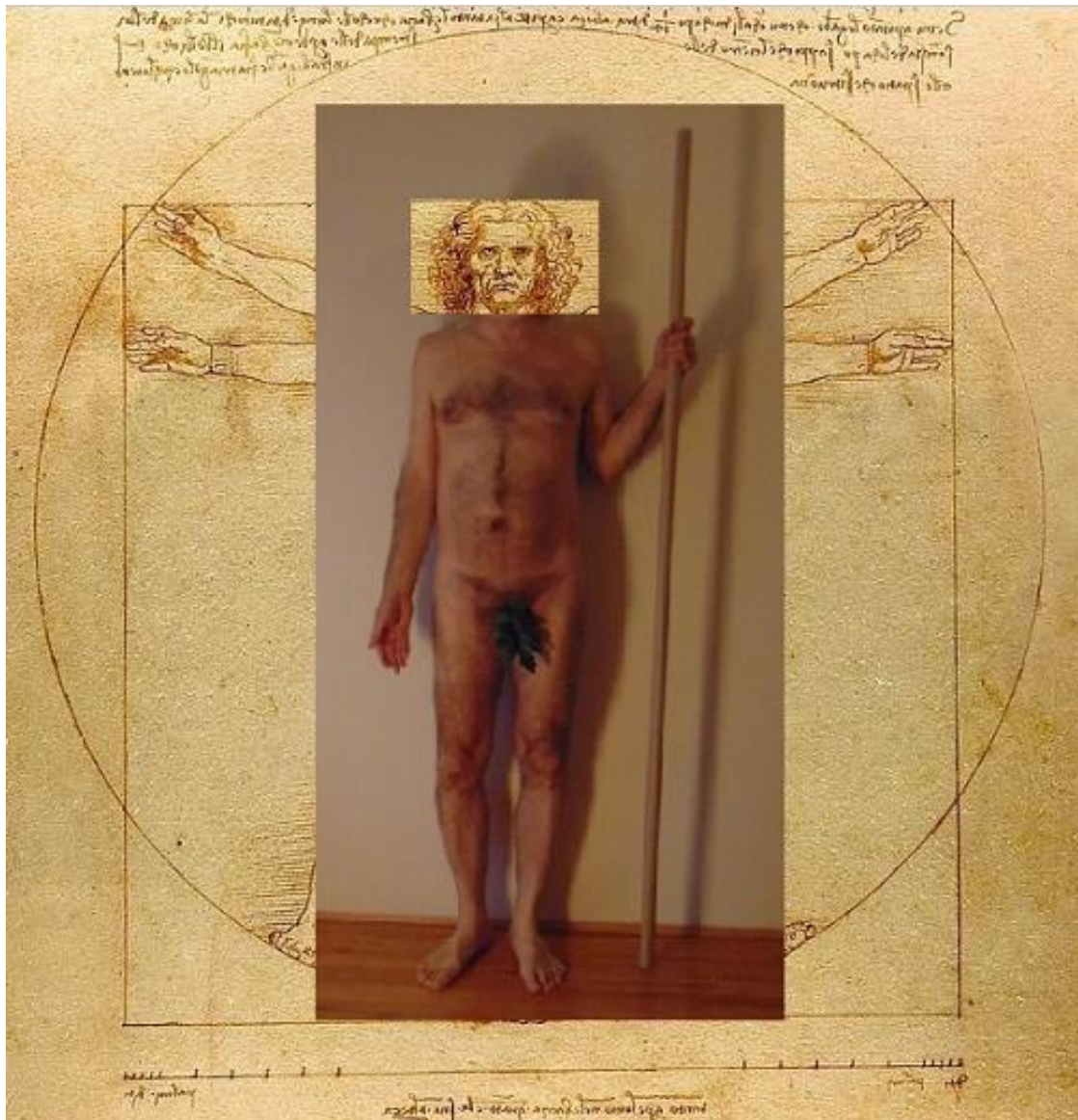


## ***Vitruvian Man by Keiko***

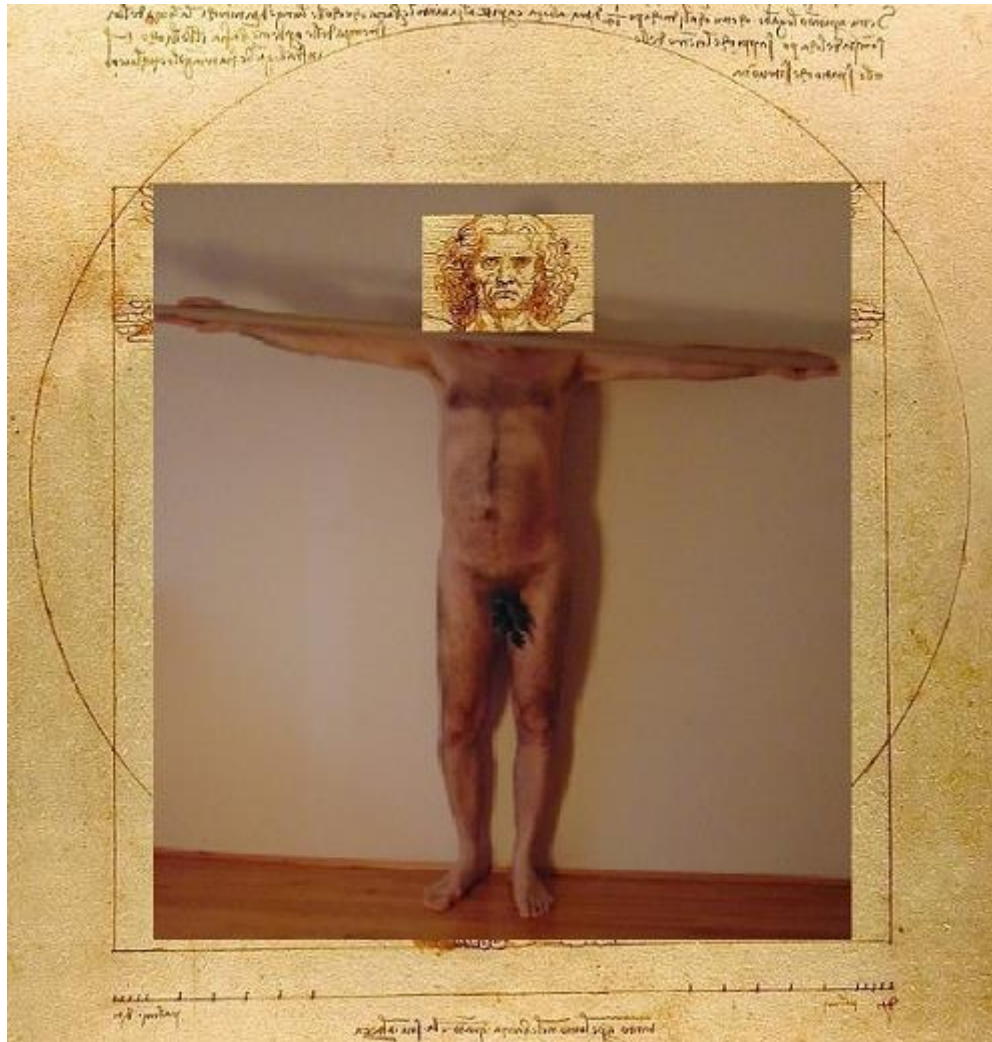


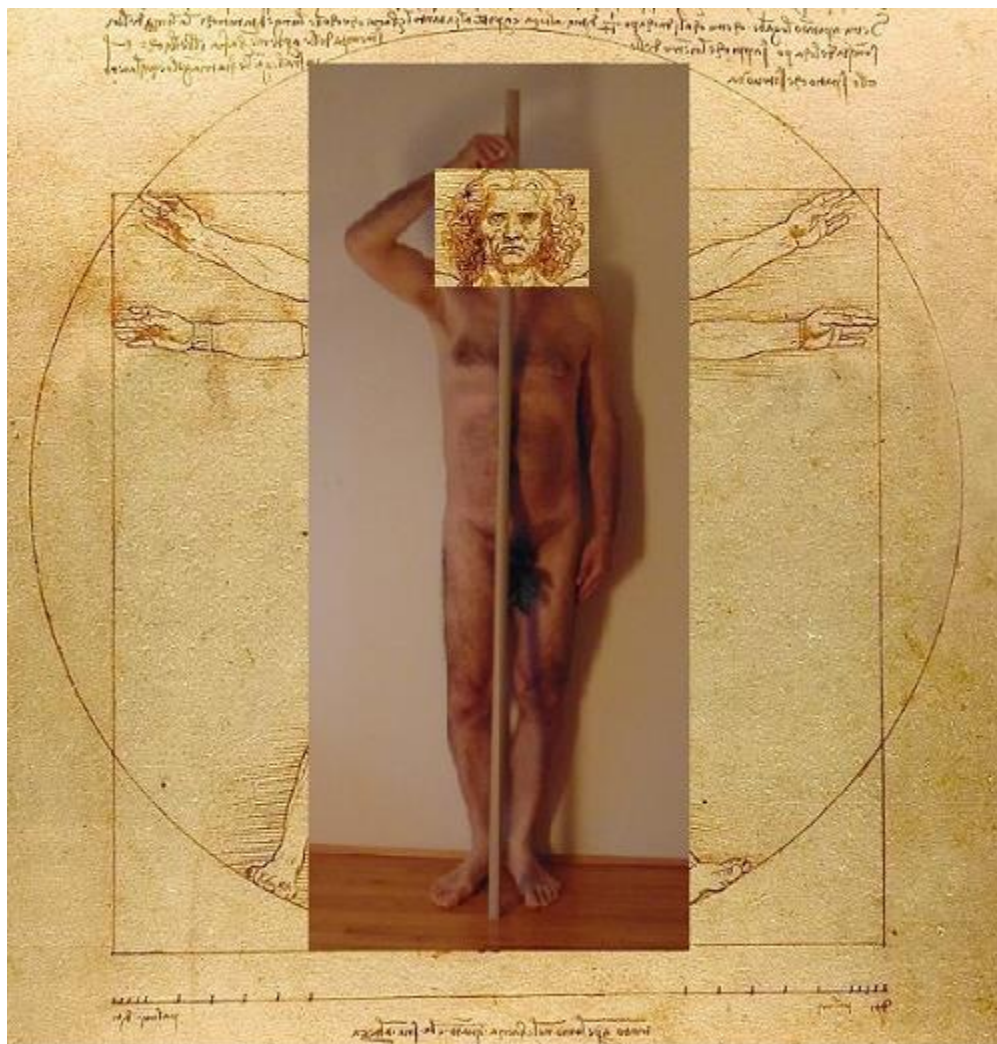


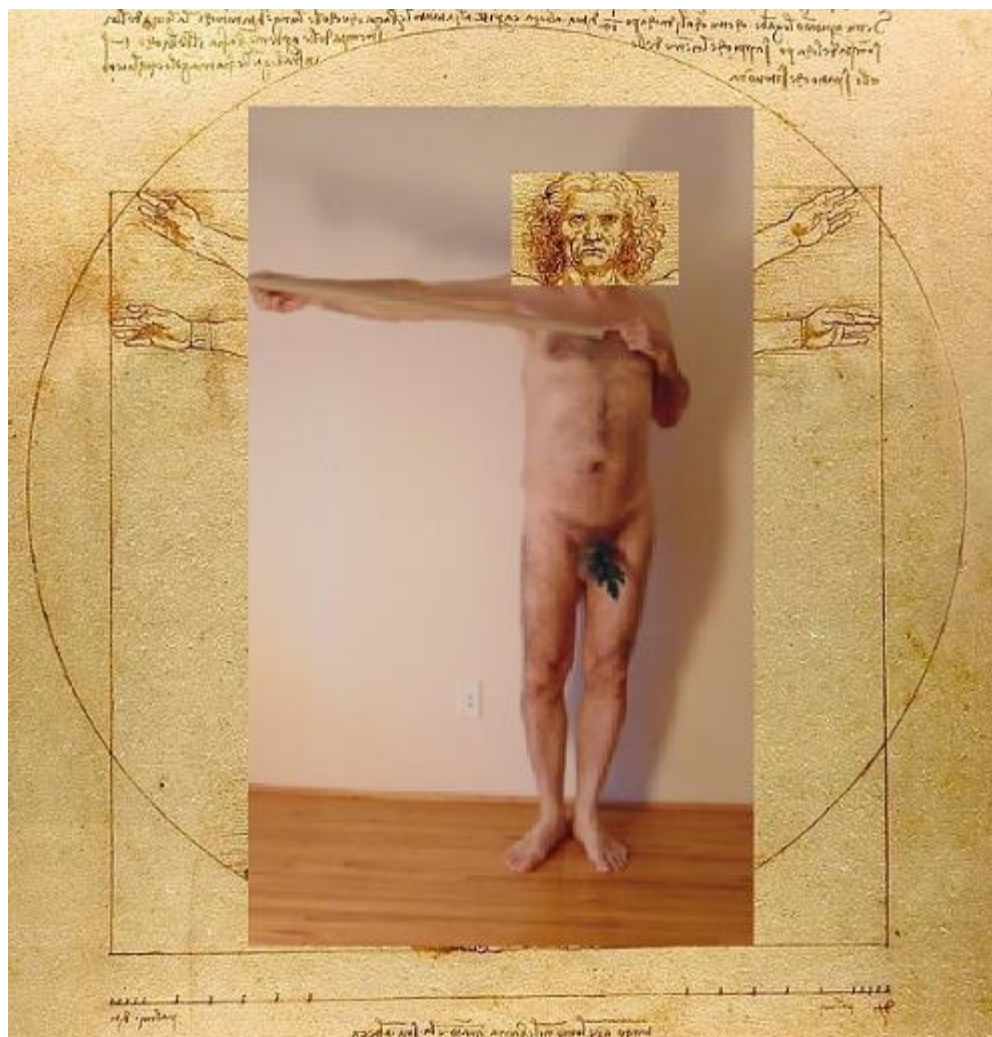




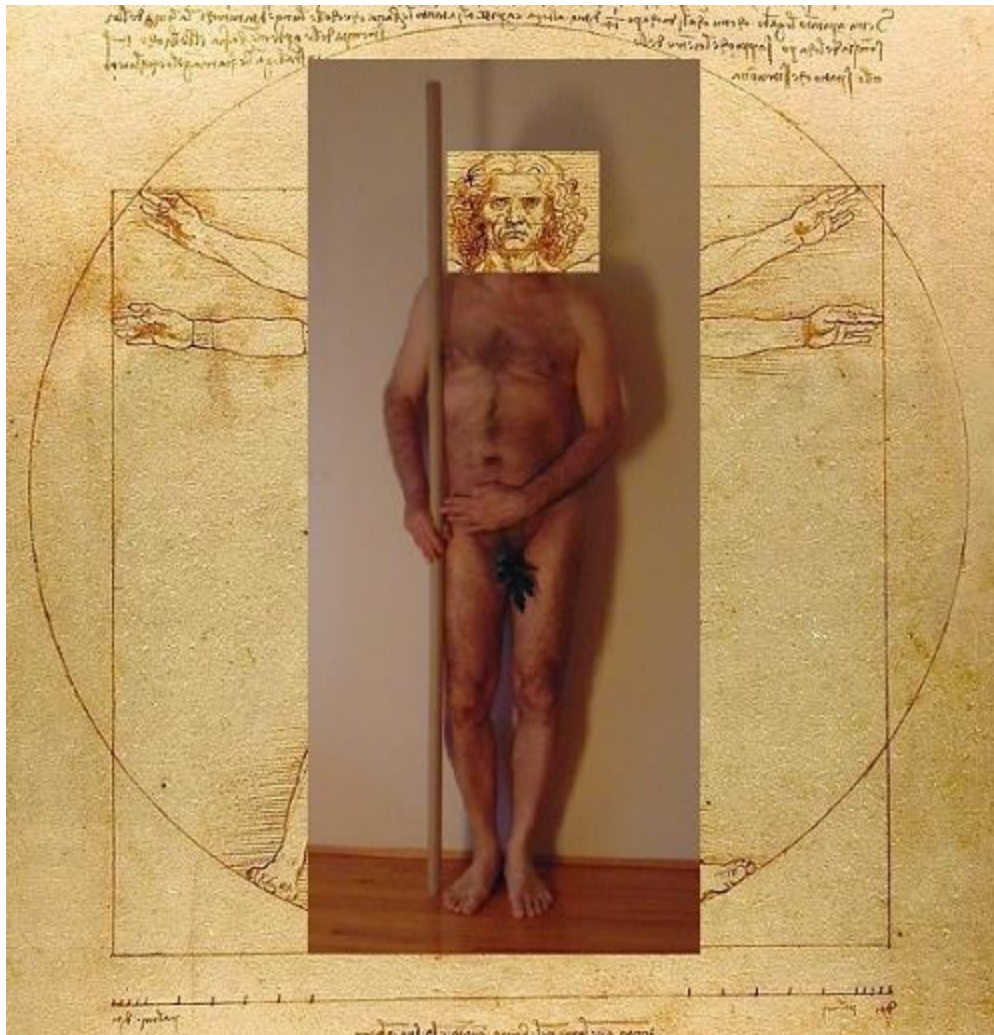


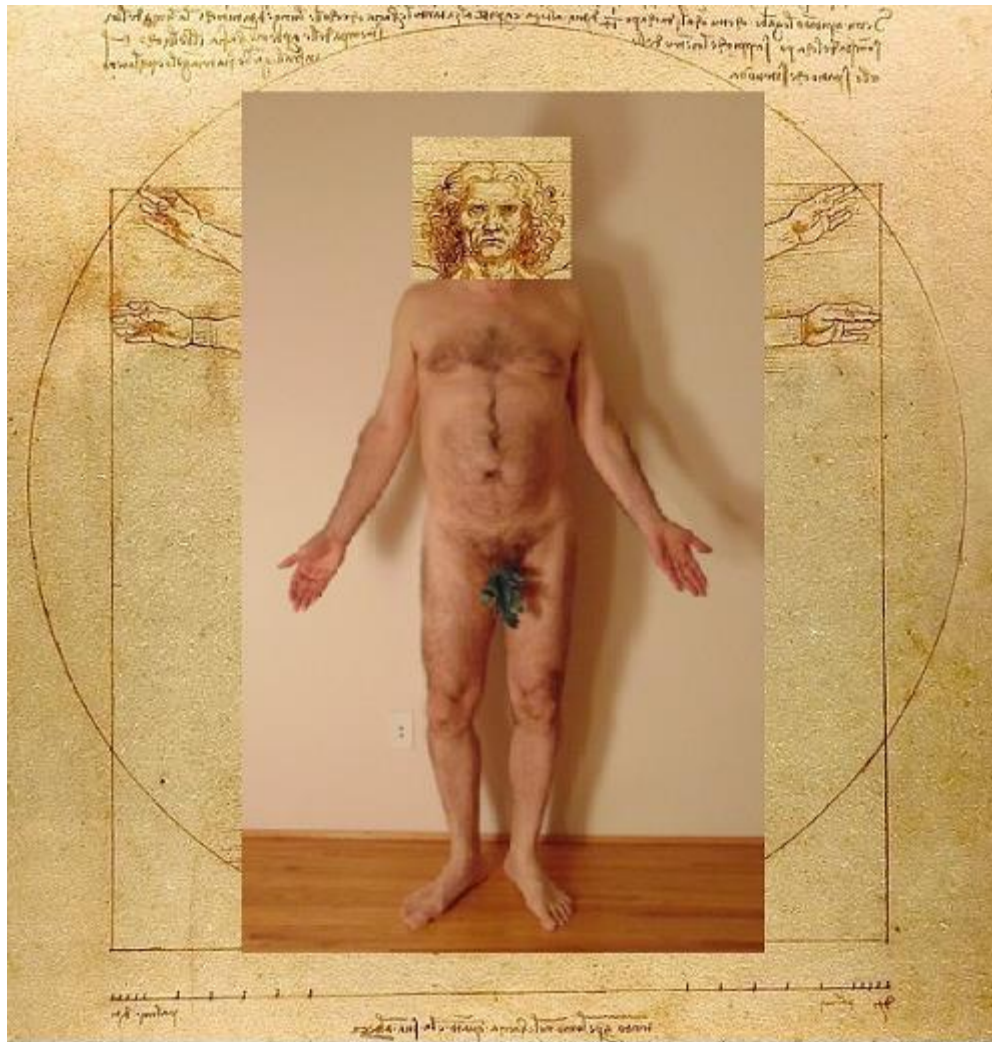












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## **The Best of Pen & Pencil (2019-2022)**

## ***A Tribute to Stephen Hawking by Patrick Bruskiewich***

Professor Hawking passed away in March, 2018. The following tribute was sent to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University Stephen Toope:

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Stephen Hawking is standing before the gates of heaven ...

In surprise he exclaims

*‘My God I am standing ...’*

He looks up and sees the pearly gates and wonders aloud

*“But why am I here? I don’t believe in God!”*

At which point a voice from on high responds ...

*I know ...but it has been a long time  
since I have had a good conversation.*



## ***She's Lost Her Head by Sarah Haxby***



[**Vancouver**] It's only bad guys that would decapitate a helpless damsel – right? No one would ever suspect that John Everett Millais (1829-1896), an artist well known for his association with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and for his hundreds of paintings portraying romantic and allegorical imagery would do such a thing?

And yet Millais literally cut out and removed the original head from the damsel in distress in the oil painting *The Knight Errant* (1870). The damsel in *The Knight Errant* is the only surviving, completed nude by Millais that we know of; it is not known how many other nudes he may have painted over.

The fact that the image does not contain the damsel's original face is not widely known. There was an issue with the original face, but Millais didn't just paint over it, as was the common practice of the time;

instead he carefully cut the original head from the painting, sewed in fresh canvas and then meticulously sewed the first face into a different canvas.



*The Knight Errant*, an image that is still reproduced prolifically today, is an archetypal portrayal of the ideal of chivalry in which a knight rescues a damsel in distress.

The image portrays a knight errant cutting the ropes binding a naked damsel to a large tree. It is twilight, and probably fall or winter as a crescent moon can be seen hanging low in the sky through the leafless branches of the trees. An article of the damsel's clothing lies on the ground. The damsel looks away from the audience and from her rescuer. The knight looks upwards, and appears sympathetically resolute as he performs his noble deed.



A knight errant was a roving knight from medieval chivalric romance literature who typically wandered the land in search of adventures to prove himself and to earn glory for its own sake, rather than for monetary reward. The reason behind the creation of the chivalric knight errant has socio-political history that has washed away over time even as the stereotypical character has endured.

One task popular with these knights was rescuing damsels in distress. The traditional damsel in distress is a classic theme in world literature, art, and

film of a maiden – usually a beautiful young woman – placed in a dire predicament by a villain or villains who have either abducted her and taken her to a tower or a cave, or the villains have left her somewhere in a perilous, vulnerable state, usually naked and about to confront a monster as a sacrificial offering, or just abandoned and naked chained or tethered to a rock or tree. The helplessness of the damsel in distress has made the stereotype the target of mockery and feminist criticism. The damsel in distress archetype was created partly to give the knight errant an honourable task to perform, and became popular partially as another way for artists to portray the naked female form without (too much) criticism.

So, what was wrong with the first depiction of Millais' damsel? Why did he have to remove her head and repaint the damsel's face in *The Knight Errant*? According to Millais' son, J.G. Millais, it was "because the work did not sell, the artist later thought the woman would appeal more if turning away from the knight."

It appears John Everett Millais was correct, for after he repainted the damsel the painting sold, and continues to sell and sell and sell.

But who was the original damsel? Was Millais in love with her, or just drawn to her beauty? In the original painting the damsel's face was tilted towards her rescuer, her eyes visible, not looking directly at the audience, but perhaps gazing towards her rescuer. We can understand that Millais changed the composition in order to accomplish the sale of the work, but why did he love the face of the damsel so much that he cut it out and re-used it in another

image, in which he attempted a second nude painting? Millais did not paint nudes, and the woman in *The Knight Errant* is the only known Millais female nude.

The reason for his re-use of the damsel's face is a matter of speculation. Even though Millais kept meticulous notes about his paintings he did not record the name of woman who posed for him. It is known she was real. Millais' records state that live models were used to create the painting. The damsel and the knight in the image were both painted from live models. The background was painted at Wortley Chase:

“Millais originally painted the distressed lady, who had been robbed, stripped, and bound by thieves, as looking at the spectator, and I remember well this position of the head in the picture as it hung in the drawing-room walls at Cromwell Place; but after a while he came to the conclusion that the beautiful creature would look more modest if her head were turned away, so he took the canvas down and repainted it as we see it now.” (J.G. Millais)

The original *The Knight Errant* was described as shocking to the ‘Pharisaic spirit of the Age’ and so no one dared to purchase the image until after its alteration. Millais' son states that a dealer purchased *The Knight Errant* after its alteration and then after that, in 1874, Mr. Tate purchased the painting to give it to the Nation. Thereafter the painting, which was formerly considered un-saleable, “at once gained the favour of the public.”

Even if Millais liked the original face he painted enough to place it in a new canvas, he must have felt that the image of the nude damsel with the strong gaze to the right could not sell in that second painting either. Millais changed her. He repainted her eyes so that they were lowered, and then he added clothes (although there are hints of her naked bosom beneath the sheer fabric in spots, as though he didn't want to completely cover her nudity), and the biggest change was to turn her from being a damsel into that of a martyr.



Millais created a new composition for the young woman with her hands pulled behind her back: the composition now depicted her chained to a rock. She was turned into *The Martyr of the Solway Firth* (c.1870-1872).

There must be some irony to be found in the fact that this poor damsel in distress was taken from her original situation of being rescued from being tied by a rope to a tree to that of being chained to a rock with no hope of rescue; for the story of *The Martyr of Solway Firth* is a story that does not have a happy ending.

Solway Firth is a large and relatively unspoilt estuary situated on the border between England and Scotland on the West coast of Great Britain. As a young Scottish Covenanter, age approximately eighteen years old, Margaret Wilson was executed by drowning for refusing to swear an oath declaring the King of England as head of the church. She was bound to the rocks of the Solway estuary and drowned when the tide rose.

“It is said that as the tide rose she defiantly quoted and sang from Scripture, and witnesses described how her hair floated around her head like a halo in the clear water.” (anonymous)

Margaret Wilson died on May 11, in either 1684 or 1685. She died alongside her friend, Margaret McLaughlan. McLaughlan, the spelling of whose surname is the subject of debate, did not make it into the stories nor the painting, presumably because she was not young, pretty or virginal enough to be considered a damsel in distress by Victorian standards. Margaret McLaughlan was described as “older,” and was not declared a martyr. The two Margarets are thought to be buried in the same churchyard in Wigton. Margaret Wilson became known as *The Martyr of Solway Firth*.



*The Martyr of Solway Firth*, was the subject of an illustration by Millais for the magazine *Once A Week* in 1862. The subject was one he revisited when he painted *The Martyr of Solway Firth* in 1871, both images created almost two centuries after the historic events occurred.



The painting of *The Martyr of Solway Firth* shows a young woman wearing a lightly patterned, unbuttoned, feminine blouse that is rather translucent in certain areas. We know the painting began as a nude because recently conservators at the Liverpool Museum, which now owns the painting, x-rayed the piece and found that the damsel in distress had originally been the nude originally found in *The Knight Errant*.



I speculate that once again Millais had been stumped by his damsel in distress. He wanted to portray this particular young woman nude, yet found, once again, he could not; and so he once again altered the damsel in distress to make a sale by adding the clothing and the title to provide an acceptable context to the image as afterthoughts rather than painting the picture as a direct inspiration from the story.

Was the decapitation from the original painting necessary? In order to visualize what the original Knight Errant's damsel in distress might have looked like, I've replaced the original head back into the image.

Where are the villains in *The Martyr of Solway Firth*? It is hard to see the villains that surround the damsel in distress as they're usually left out of the picture frame, literally and metaphorically. The villains in the stories associated with damsels in distress are often not portrayed as the focus is usually on depicting the nude female in her state of vulnerable, sexually available distress. In the strange case of *The Knight Errant*, we are not even sure who the story villains were.

*The Knight Errant* is unusual from Millais' oeuvre as it is an image that does not direct the viewer to a specific narrative, myth or story that the picture is illustrating. Millais' son describes her as a damsel who had been robbed, stripped, and bound by thieves, but what specific story or poem or song this image derives from has been lost.



It is sometimes hypothesized that the work draws upon the mythology of Andromeda, but as the image lacks any apparent visual tie-in to the story of Andromeda (who was tied to a sea-side rock and rescued by Perseus), I feel that it is erroneous to ascribe the Andromeda story to *The Knight Errant*. As all of Millais' other mythological images draw upon clear sources, I think there likely is a specific story behind *The Knight Errant* that is being depicted, but the narrative connection has been lost to us.

As with many of the depictions of the damsel in distress, the true villain is not in the picture. The finger of blame as to who the greatest villains are can be pointed in many directions including at the mythic monsters, the absent

villains who stripped the young women and then tied or chained up the damsels, the religious zealots and those who chained up the sacrifices, the kidnappers and dragons who carried the damsels away, the artists who painted the images, the patrons who purchase the images and perpetuated the market for more damsel imagery to be produced, and of course, the audiences who have eagerly flocked, for centuries and who, even in modern times, continue to look time and time again upon the damsels in distress.

The fascination of the damsel in distress continues to fascinate and enslave our attention. Of course, as in the case of Millais' decapitated damsel, we prefer that she looks the other way, the better for us to view her without her looking back at us. In the viewing of such works I am unapologetic of the guilty pleasure that occurs, even in academic consideration of these works, even if it might make villains out of us all.

***He Knew the Pleasures of my Heart by Annie Gavani***

He knew the pleasures of my heart  
    I watched him as he undressed,  
Taking in the measure of all his parts  
    last admiring that of him that made me happiest ...  
During the day his was a master's air ...  
    his portent of stoicism and stone  
But at night here without a care,  
    he well knew we were all alone  
So I lay back and let myself be loved  
    by him, buried within my softness, as if  
With every caress and kisses he pushed  
    me closer towards myself and into my abyss.  
He lapped my loins and my thighs ...  
    he ate me up like a ripe sweet pome.  
With every one of his kisses, I sighed  
    and resigned myself to his hungry lips.  
Then I'd tell him to slow and pause ...  
    to stop being such an eager boy!  
My belly, my breasts, my lips call  
    to share the measure of my joy.

## ***Remembering the Best of Her by Patrick Bruskiewich***

In the background the radio was playing Debussy's *Claire de Lune*. It was just the thing he needed to calm him down.

He sat and ate his morning toast, forcing it down with a gulp of tepid, stale coffee. He had run out of strawberry jam and had forgotten to pick up butter when he was last at the grocers. Well, honestly he couldn't afford either jam or butter, and the bread had that very morning been baked by his bighearted neighbor. The smell of fresh bread, now toast, was a welcomed and comforting one for him. The small generosityes of his few friends were what were keeping him alive.

The old, lonely Polish lady next door was kind to him, treating him as if he was her only son. She spent much of her day in the kitchen baking for her family and friends. She had two daughters, both in their thirties, both happily married, and a bevy of young grand children. She was a widow. Her husband had died in a coal mine accident back in Poland when her daughters were two and four. But that was a world and life time ago for her. She now lived in her small and simple apartment in Vancouver, never too far from her family and friends. Life was kind to her and she was kind to him in return.

He was proud but not too proud to accept her small generosityes. The larger generosityes he did have to refuse. At times she was just too lonely, and just too generous. She was old enough to be his mother. For the last few weeks, when he could afford it, he would bring her a bottle of Polish potato vodka

and together they would eat and drink the night away: Borscht, periogi, lump fish caviar on freshly baked bread, smoked white fish, and poppy seed cake with Chickory coffee for desert. What is the expression ... the surest way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

This morning his stomach ached. She had warm grey eyes, and a bosom that was very Slavic. But luckily he did not have far to stagger home after their frivolities, otherwise things would get more complicated than they are. He had grown to like potato vodka, but not as much as she does, naturally. In return, he promised her that one day he would write her life story, as she told it. He drew the line at doing his laundry. He was not too proud. Somehow the whole neighbor thing made him feel like he was living his life in a Bukowski poem.

The old wire mesh electric fan on his desk whirled hither and thither, blowing hot arid air through his hair and across his desk. A sudden glare caught his eye. He looked up and out his window. Cars were passing in the street below. Outside the midday sun was melting the tar patching up the road. He thought enough to remind himself not to walk on the patches, if he was mad enough to venture out into the midday sun.

He turned back to his writing. He thought himself as good as Hemingway or Fitzgerald, but no one published his short stories, and as a result no one was there to read them: *The Black Mask*, *Today and Tomorrow*, *A Secret Love*. ... these were his priceless manuscripts gathering dust on the corner of his desk, lost beneath a growing pile of rejection letters. Why did he bother? Maybe if

he was living a bug's life in far off Paris with her, then they would compare him to Henry Miller. But then he would have to be a lecher, as well. He heard his Polish neighbor singing through the wall. Does he have to go half way around the world to live such a life? He turned the volume of the radio up, but not too much.

As he wrote about love he sat back in his chair remembering his French girl friend. He remembered oh so many things about her. She was like a strange liqueur to him. He had never known anyone remotely like her. Sure, he had known and loved other woman, but in her arms he was just a little boy, and she knew it. It was as if he had been a virgin and she, his awakening to life. What is it about *Les Parisiennes*?

They had spent more time in bed together than doing anything else, except perhaps sitting in the bath and sharing poetry. He sat farther back in his old oak chair and stared out into space as he remembered the poetry she had recounted, and had translated for him. The chair creaked ominously under the tension of him.

Her reciting of French poetry had been Baudelaire, always Baudelaire:

*Au pays parfumé que le soleil caresse,  
J'ai connu sous un dais d'arbres toute empourprés  
Et de palmiers d'où pleut sur les yeux la paresse,  
Une dame Creole aux charmes ignorés.*

In that perfumed country caressed by the sun,  
I have known, under a canopy of purple trees  
And palm raining idleness upon the eyes,  
A Creole lady of private beauty.

*Son teint est pâle et chaud; la brune enchanteresse  
A dans le col des airs noblemen manières;  
Grande et svelte en marchant comme une chasseresses,  
Son sourire est tranquille et ses yeux assures.*

Her shade is pale and warm; this brown enchantress  
Has gracefully mannered airs to herself;  
Large and sinuous, walking like a huntress,  
Her smile is silent and her eyes secure.

*Si vous allies, Madame, au vrai pays de gloire,  
Sur le bords de la Seine ou de la verte Loire,  
Belle digne d'orner les antiques manoirs,*

If you should go, Madam, to the true country of glory,  
On the banks of the Seine or of the green Loire,  
Fair lady fit to decorate ancient mansions,

*Vous feriez, à l'abri des ombreuses retriates,  
Germer mille sonnets dans le Coeur des poètes,  
Que vos grandes yeux rendraient plus soumis que vos noirs.*



In some shady and secluded refuge, you would awake  
A thousand sonnets in the hearts of poets,  
Whom your great eyes would make more subject than your darkness.

He missed her oh so much ... some mornings more than others. He had slept alone last night, once again dreaming about her all night long. When he woke up he was nearly bent out of shape. He remembered her beauty, her bounties, and the way she slept next to him, so close, so fragile and so innocent. They had been together for three, and now had been apart for six months.

Outside a car honked his horn, breaking his train of thought. Damn!

He reached for another piece of toast and let the crumbs fall where they may. He looked down at his old white cotton shirt was stained with wear, and heavy with perspiration. He did not bother to brush the crumbs off. The fan would do that on its next pass. The old fan rattled its agreement. If he could afford it he would smoke, what writer doesn't. But his asthma saved him from the price of that vice, and so it was to bad coffee, and solitude that he turned. Besides, the air was so thick with smoke from the forest fires that he didn't need to puff any cigarettes. A million acres had already been turned to ash this fire season, and they anticipated another million had yet to burn. By the taste of the smoke he knew whether it had come from the interior, or had drifted up from Washington State. The cedar smell told him the wind was blowing north.

Debussy was finished and now the news was droning in over the radio.

Far off in Paris another bomb had gone off killing seven British tourists on a tour bus. The youngest, a boy of seven was on his first trip to the continent, had died at the scene.

There were also more dead children in the civil war in Syria. Why they would call such a thing civil boggled his mind.

In Germany a mosque had been burned to the ground. In Stockholm three women had been raped overnight by roving gangs of street people. The Government was calling for a review of its immigration policies.

The banking system in Moscow had had another melt down for the second day in a row because of the *Shadow Gang*, or someone claiming to be them. It was reported that four hundred million rubles had gone missing. Another half million computers were stuck up with ransomware.

Bit Coins were trading at \$ 1,750 apiece and worth more than gold or platinum. Some Russian hacker had been arrested in Greece for laundering \$ 3 billion worth of Bit Coins. Both the Russians and the Americans were fighting for his extradition. Supposedly he had embezzled \$ 11,000 out of a bank account in Russian.

He smiled to himself. If only he had listened to Hairy Pot Head and bought into Bit Coin, when he had a chance.

The fast paced card game in Washington was Trump – no one knew the rules and jokers were wild. Martinets danced in Ottawa. The government had fallen in Victoria, on Vancouver Island, and there was a new Premier in British Columbia.

He leaned back in his chair and reached over with the tips of his outstretched fingers to change the channel on the radio. He was depressed enough and didn't need any more bad news.

He turned back to his writing and took another gulp of his tepid, stale coffee. It was instant coffee – *Nescafe* – all the packets he could snag at the unemployment office when no one was looking. The packets of raw brown sugar that lay on the desk next to the coffee had been pilfered last Monday when his publisher took him for lunch to give him the bad news. No to *Today and Tomorrow*. But if he put more wanton sex into *A Secret Love* there might be a chance yet for that manuscript to get published.

But he was a writer, damn it. Like Hemingway and Fitzgerald, he refused to use words like f@#k and c\$%t in his writing. He was no Henry Miller and so, it was going to be a long, dry summer for him. He was just not cut up to be a bug'r and he wasn't going to write no brain fungus. If his readers could not understand the meanings of words such as *the best of her*, they could go fuddle themselves.

He remembered the last time they had slept together, before she packed her bags to fly home. She had exhausted him. Her student visa had expired, and she said she was forced to return to Paris. She wasn't all that happy about returning home. He had suspected her year in Vancouver was to escape some unhappiness that perhaps a year abroad could push away. He had wanted to ask her about it, but didn't have the courage and in the end figured they didn't know each other well enough. He was sad to see her go, and was so desperate to keep her that the morning she was to leave he had proposed to her.

But she had laughed at him, right to his face, and said no –“ we are wonderful lovers, but we are not meant to be together forever, to live together – that would destroy our love.” Besides, she said that she missed a good baguette. You couldn't find any good baguettes in Vancouver. The only thing that Vancouver could produce, she said, were stale donuts, and bagels with onions, and poppy seeds ... *dégueulasse*. He had had to look the word up and were it not for the fact he loved her he would have taken her to task for such disparagement. He remembered her grin as she said this. Coming from Paris, Vancouver felt like the backside of the moon to her. She could be honest with him, brutally honest at times, hiding behind her mysterious and all knowing Parisienne smile.

She had had the same grin on her face as they sat in the bath tub together the night before she left, when she recounted Baudelaire's poem *Le Chat*. As this moment came to mind from the tips of his toes to the tips of his fingers, a terrible surge of longing rushed through him:

*Viens, mon beau chat, sur mon Coeur amoureux;  
Retiens les griffes de ta patte,  
Et laisse-moi plonger dans tes beaux yeux,  
Mêlés de métal et d'agate.*

My beautiful cat, come onto my heart full of love,  
Hold back the claws of your paw,  
And let me plunge into your adorable eyes,  
Mixed with metal and agate.

*Lorsque mes doigts caressent a loisir  
Ta tête et ton dos elastique,  
Et que ma main s'envivre du plaisir,  
De palper ton corps électrique.*

When my fingers lazily fondle  
Your head and your elastic back,  
And my hand gets drunk with the pleasure  
Of feeling your electric body,

*Je vois ma femme en esprit. Son regard,  
Comme le tien, amiable bête,  
Profound et froid, coupe et fend comme un dard.*

I see in spirit my personal lady. Her glance,  
Like yours, dear creature,

Deep and cold, slits and splits like a dart.

*Et, des pieds jusques a la tête,  
Un air subtil, un dangereux parfum,  
Nagent autour de son corps brun.*

And from her feet to her head,  
A subtle atmosphere, a dangerous perfume,  
Swim around her brown body.

Then the following morning she was gone.

Yes they wrote to each other ... for awhile ... but the letters became less intimate, and they arrived more and more days apart, until eventually they stopped arriving altogether. He had heard from a friend of her friend that she had stumbled upon some lonely and rich Parisian fellow twice her age, had gotten pregnant by him, and they had been quickly married. She couldn't be happy, he thought, but she had always put her comfort before her happiness, and would probably do good by her new life. In the months that she had been with him, she had lived a free and easy life, while he toiled. Maybe that was her nature.

Maybe that is how she seemed to stay young and so innocent, while, at least innocent in the sense of Anais Nin. It was some weeks after she left that he realized how much she actually looked like Nin, when he had stumbled on a picture of her on a book dust cover. Maybe that was what first attracted him

to her. They had met at a party of a mutual friend, each coming with someone else, and then leaving together. It had seemed so natural to be together. That very night they entered the gates of paradise together and so started three months of bliss. Now she was gone. At the time it didn't seem to him that she was taking advantage of him.

This morning he was sadder than usual. Sad because even his publisher thought *The Delta of Venus* and *Anais Nin* were mere cocktails. His publisher couldn't see it – good writing didn't sell – only *Fifty Shades* and garbage like that. “Gratuitous sex and bondage sells, romantic short stories don't. You have to stick it in the reader and twist it,” he had said over his Potato Latka, sour cream and caviar, “otherwise they don't feel it.” And he wasn't talking about a knife. He had nearly choked on his eggs benny as he sat there in disbelief. Was he caught in some Hollywood nightmare? Was it not time for him to find another publisher? It wasn't enough for him to be taken for the occasional free lunch. It wasn't enough to be lectured on what sells and what doesn't. He didn't care about the perversities of the modern consumer. All he wanted was his short stories to be published.

If she was here, she would understand him, and he would be able to survive this misfortunes. Love triumphs all. But he had loved, and had lost her. She was gone for good, sitting on some park bench in some quiet corner of Paris breast feeding a little baby boy that looked very much like his father. He felt so jealous!

And to make matters more disappointing for him, last Friday some patrons of Letters and Arts had come across *Pen and Pencil Magazine* that he and a few of his writer friends had struggled so hard to establish on the net. They hacked, trolled and trashed it because it was good, and they were not. Maybe it was the piece he had written about there not being any modern day Russian authors worth a good read, and that Tolstoy was stale beyond any hope.

He coughed and looked out the window. The wind had picked up and the smoke was being blown about. Yes, it was going to be a very, very long hot summer.

He had missed putting in his rent check for July by just a day, and had to scramble about to make sure there was enough money in the bank. You borrow until you need to beg. But what will come after the begging? His family and close friends had all but given up on him. Now that she was gone, I guess, even she did. That's why she left him. Didn't he once read that Henry Miller manage to survive a debt of \$ 28,000, before he became a well known writer. Hell, if Henry Miller could manage to carry a debt and pay the rent, so could he. He wasn't an American down and out in Paris, was he?

He had had to hock his laptop and now he was sitting at his desk writing with pen and paper at hand. At least he remembered to double space his manuscripts. And I guess opening an old dictionary from time to time wouldn't do him much harm. He was a writer after all, and writers like all artists were meant to suffer. It is through their suffering that they become great. He smirked. Who was it that had said that great writers only become



famous after they are dead, and that parasites can get rich off of them, while the literary critics pick at their dead bones.

Almost on queue Dvorak's Largo from his *New World Symphony* is playing on the radio. Don't give up, he thought!

His latest rejection was typical. The call had *Hope* as a theme and what does he do but write a short submission, *I Hope to be Read and Remembered*:

"Every day I sit to write a few hundred words hoping that I would be read and remembered. I am not married, except perhaps to my writing, and don't have offspring, unless you count *mes oeuvres*. I am of the age where my urge to procreate has long dried out.

I write poetry, prose, as well as some science and math. More people read my science and math than my other manifestations. Maybe it is because I exist in my world of the *Mathematical Bohemian* and not that of the poetic or proselytic. Seen through my eyes, the world has a different meaning. I am more of an Einsteinean than a Kardashian.

Perhaps a hundred years from now, many decades after I am gone, I will be read and remembered, but maybe not for my science and math. Maybe a thousand years hence the curious will discover my poetry and prose and wondered why he died a poor and forgotten man.

Or, maybe in the end my science and math will have made the world a better place. Is there such a thing as mathematical justice?

I can only hope. “

The irony is, of course, that he had submitted the piece on a Monday morning and it was rejected that very afternoon.

If only they were truthful. If only they could enjoy these cold, homespun stories of life that are real, and honest, and not the make believe or *fantagorical*. Perhaps it was the underlying humor of his stories they didn't get.

These were stories about Hairy Pot Head who was always so stoned that he could not keep down a job. Yet, somehow, he always had money. These were stories about his younger sister who foolishly spent the best years of her life, and most of her meager inheritance, either helping Hairy out of his many troubles, or was studying psychology and contemporary writing at UBC. She was now a barista at Starbucks during the day, from 8 to 5, seven days each week and a struggling single mom at night with a four year old with Asperger's, a love child that was the consequence of her falling in with her flaky creative writing instructor, who she thought would give her an A if only she opened herself up to his *creative impulses*. Up until then she had been a good girl. After all her name was Virginia.

He was now the head of the Department of Contemporary Writing at UBC, and married to his second wife. He divorced his first wife when she tried to run Virginia and their six month old baby over as they all three of them were walking across Robson Street one pleasant autumn morning. Why hadn't he marry Virginia, instead of some young floozy?

He wrote on. He knew Virginia, and loved both her and her baby, but was too poor to help her out, and too proud to let her help him out. Yet, when either was lonely they would share an evening together, but not the way you think they would. She would let him wash her back as she read his latest writing. She thought he was really good, as both a man and a writer. But sadly, the bastard had given her more than just a child, but something simplex as well. It tore his heart that he had to go out of his way to keep Virginia's honest life from finding the printer's ink.

Yes, his stories were real, cold and homespun. But was there any room for him under the sun? Maybe, she said, he should move to New York City, and get away from this place. Flee to the other end of the continent. Start anew. That is where the real publishers are. At least there, there are different pretenses.

It's not that Canadians don't have deep convictions, about important things like donuts and hockey, it's just that these fall into that unfathomable, hollowness of the place, a place where ignorance is bliss and well, people are their own follies.

Do they want big men here in Canada? Do they want them cultured? What is cultured? He knew that the only culture they have in Vancouver is at the grocer's, in the imported cheese isle, there among the Limburger, Gorgonzola, Stilton and Brie. It has been years since he enjoyed a good stout and unpasteurized Stilton. How it really works here In Vancouver, the antipode of the cultured world, is that if you say something over and over, like ... *cannabis is good for you* ... then you cultivate brain fungus. Yea to Hairy Pot Head! As he sat there it finally dawned on him why ol' Pot Head always seemed to have a few dollars in his pocket, and always in increments of thirty dollars ... never less than two forty at the end of the month, but never more than four twenty.

When does the Amtrak leave, Virginia asked him last night? Maybe Portland, in Oregon? Just anywhere but here. Missed today's 150<sup>th</sup>. He had no reason to celebrate Canada's Birthday. He didn't recognize this country anymore as being his Canada. Here they paid the librarians more than the writers and wondered why there are no good Canadian authors. Maybe there are a few good librarians. And besides he preferred the earnestness of Hemingway, to the mopiness of Munro any day. Hell, he had even started to enjoy *The History of the English Speaking Peoples* by Winston Churchill. After all they had given him a Nobel Prize in Literature for his writing.

He crunched hard on the final bit of toast, a piece of dried out crust. It stuck in his throat and he began to choke. He picked up the nearly empty cup of coffee to wash it down. As he finished the cup some drops of coffee dribbled

down his chin and onto his white cotton shirt. This didn't bother him. He had been sitting for too long and he had hit a dry spell in his writing.

He pulled the shirt off over his head. Then he got up to pour himself a cold bath. There was not much else he could do in the middle of a hot day like today, Saturday July 1st.

He would go into town tomorrow July 2<sup>nd</sup> and poke around a bit. He enjoyed Sundays the most, when the streets of Vancouver were empty and when they still rang church bells to summon the devout to the Catholic Cathedral. Maybe he would even go to church and pray for his deliverance. Miracles sometime happen.

Virginia had taken him to church a few weeks back. When he sat beside her on that hard wooden pew life had seemed almost perfect. People looked at the three of them, mother, child and him as if they belonged together. As he sat next to her and thought about all she had been through, and about all that she would endure he knew he could not leave her to her own solitary efforts. Struggle as they might through life he would not abandon his friend, and her son. Then from the very depths of his remembrances came a few words that he once read in D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* about Anna Victrix: The Church talked about her soul, about the welfare of mankind, as if the saving of her soul lay in her performing certain acts conducive to the welfare of mankind. Well and good – it was so, then.”

That very evening he sat to write something special:

## “Why I Write

There are perhaps three main reasons why I write and these reasons are a true, dear and clear reflection of my beliefs. I write to pursue truth, virtue and understanding.

I cannot claim that writing has been in my blood since I was very young, however I can claim that I have become a mature writer by reading the fine works of others and contemplating the truths, virtues and understanding they have shared with the world.

In the pursuit of truth there is that dichotomy that Immanuel Kant expressed, which I paraphrase ... *“two things fill the mind with ever increasing wonder and awe ... the starry heavens above us and the moral laws within us.”*

It is not a pure awe that truth requires of us but instead an impersonal and practical one that is set in our efforts to understand the physical laws that governs to the far corners of the universe in which we reside, as well as the moral laws that govern our actions, we mere baubles in the starry heavens.

Those corners of the universe can be to the very large, the scale of galaxies and the universe itself, or it might be the corners set out in the other direction, that where quarks and leptons reside and quanta is the

norm. As we well know, given the advances in modern science, these two limits, the very large and the very small, are directly coupled to one another, borrowing a mathematical concept from particle physics. And we too, organic machines made of organic materials, are delicately coupled in at the middle of the universal scale of distances.

What of the moral laws and how they pertain to virtue? I am Catholic and bring to my life a Catholic sensibility. The world seems a far more sinister place than two decades ago. While the Cold War is deemed over, the world has become even more lawless and many more millions suffer today the inequities of war and oppression than in the past. The United Nations count the suffering numbers at 65 million, numbers greater than at any time since the end of the Second World War, with 100 million more suffering from famine and a lack of clean, potable water.

I write to express my Catholic sensibilities to lend aid to those who suffer and to encourage those who govern to do more to alleviate their suffering.

In the pursuit of understanding I reflect to a large degree the sensibilities of Albert Einstein in that this understanding does not deem us the centre of the universe, but a minuscule part of it, with a clear understanding of our limitations and possibilities. It was he who reminded us that, “*once you stop learning ... you start dying.*” Is it

possible that the troubled heart of our civilization has already begun to wither and fade?

Every moment is precious, all of our words and actions meaningful, if we decide to make them so. “

And to his great joy his little bit of truth was accepted to be published and all hope was restored. Virginia had hugged him, and kissed him and cried for him, and told him her prayers had been answered. Miracles do happen!

Then he grabbed the library book he had borrowed last week and turned to the final few pages of Hammett’s *The Thin Man*. Maybe he would find out who did it, before he fell asleep in the bath. He also snagged the last of the Pernod and didn’t even bother to pour it in a glass. *La Parisienne* would be horrified that he was just going to drink it right out of the bottle. Before he had met her he had no idea what *Pernod* was. He didn’t even drink beer. Now look at him!

He left the fan to blow on. On the radio Rodrigo’s Adagio from *Concierto de Aranjuez* was just in its beginnings. Hell ... everything about today was reminding him of her. The first time they had made love in the afternoon Rodrigo had been playing on the radio.

No matter, he had to escape this heat and that meant a cold bath.



He saw the tap on the sink was dripping, but he didn't care. Let it drip! He took off the last of his things and left them fall at his feet. Just before he stepped into the bath he looked up at himself in the old French silvered mirror over the sink. If I am made in God's image, he thought, God must have a sense of humor. He stepped into the bath, settled in, and let the cold water find every part of him. The feeling, although somewhat uncomfortable, was a feeling nonetheless.

He opened *The Novels of ...* to page 691. How did Dashiell Hammett make it through life, he thought. He smiled as he read Nora's words to her husband Nick: "*Tell me something, Nick. Tell me the truth: when you were wrestling with Mimi, didn't you have an erection?*"

"*Oh a little,*" Nick responded.

The e-word forced him back to the same place, but at a happier time. He remembered the first time they had shared a bath together. She had whispered her first Baudelaire poem into his ear:

*La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.*

Nature is a temple where living pillars

Let sometime emerge confused words;

Man crosses it through forests of symbols  
Which watch him with intimate eyes.

Her breasts had become fuller and her nipples had come alive as she  
whispered into his ears.

*Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.*

Like those deep echoes that meet from afar  
In a dark and profound harmony,  
As vast as night and clarity,  
So perfumes, colours, tones answer each other.

He had looked down at the bright crucifix and gold chain around her neck. A  
flush had passed across her body so that it had the red glow of the morning  
sky.

*Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,  
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,  
Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,*

There are perfumes fresh as children's flesh,

Soft as grass, green as meadows,  
And others, corrupted, rich, triumphant,

She had leaned back to kiss him. They had both begun to tremble together. Goose bumps appeared all over her body. Yes God had created woman after man after learning from her mistakes. And she had won an award for the creation of woman. For an instant, time had stopped ...

*Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,  
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,  
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.*

Possessing the diffusion of infinite things,  
Like amber, musk, incense and aromatic resin,  
Chanting the ecstasies of spirit and senses.

The ecstasies of spirit eh ... He smirked and took a good swig of Pernod, which warmed his insides. There he was, cold on the outside he thought, but warm on the inside. Maybe that is how real life was meant to be.

His wiggled his toes that poked up from the far end of the bath tub. Small waves passed along the surface of the water, refracting the sunlight streaming in from the little window above him. He looked up, out of the window, and could just make out a tiny patch of blue sky. He took the last swig of Pernod. Maybe the smoke was clearing up? He felt light headed.

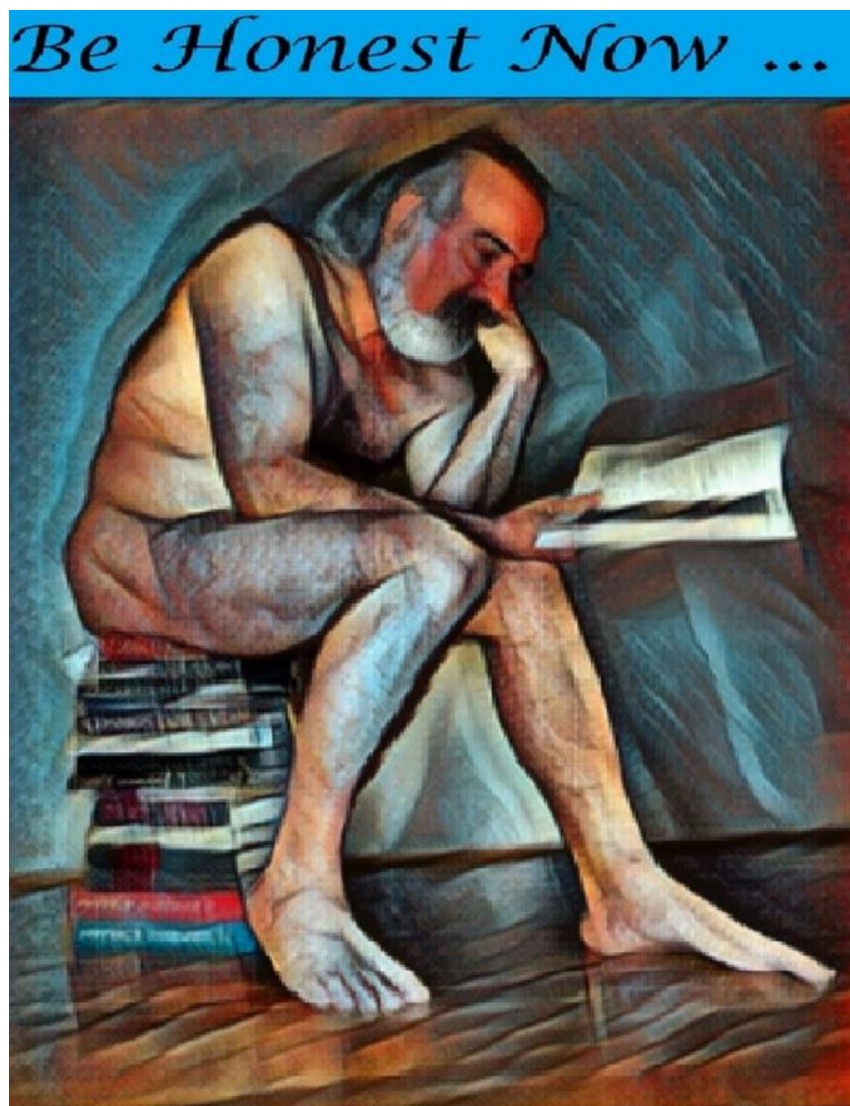
That little glimpse of blue sky seemed to cheer him up. He now knew how best to finish the short story he was writing. Something about blue sky, and hope ... If I stop writing I can no longer be me.

As he lay back in his cold bath remembering her, he had all but forgotten Nick and Nora. He looked past the book, past the words, at the best of him poking up out of the water and smiled. Was life really about remembering the best of her?

He dashed Hammett down onto the bathroom floor, splashing bath water all about, and watched with some fascination as the dry pages soaked up the water off the floor. Tonight he will drink too much vodka and tomorrow morning he will go to Church with Virginia and her son.

Well ... real life does do a man good.

*Pictorial: The Modern Thinker*



*Have you read a good math  
or science book recently?*

## ***Falling in Love with a Beast by Emily Mathews***

[**Vancouver**] Why does Beauty fall in love with the Beast? Why does the well bred, well mannered lady fall in love with the mysterious and social outcast? He is the object of fear within the community and yet Beauty still falls in love with his beastly form. This inexplicable idea has taken allegorical form, evolved into myth, and has become a common motif that we see in modern fairy tales and storytelling today.

The evolution of the Beauty and the Beast motif results in a development of the original archetypical characters. In C. S. Lewis's novel *Till We Have Faces* he develops the concept that in myth human sympathy is at a minimum. All the characters are like shapes moving in another world. Meyer, in his discussion of *Till We Have Faces*, argues that even though Lewis titles the novel as a retelling of the myth, it is in fact not. Lewis' own characterization of myth works against it "since the psychology of the characters is a major interest." (Meyer 184). Likewise, in modern retellings of Beauty and the Beast, the mythic tale has changed to adopt to the fairy tale genre. It is no longer myth but a fairy tale. Despite the fundamental differences however, the fairy tale could not exist without the original mythic elements.

### **The Development of the Myth: The Tale of Cupid and Psyche**

The predominant, earliest written example of the Beauty and the Beast tale is Apuleius' allegorical *Metamorphoses* (Accardo 53). The tale is of a beautiful mortal girl, whose beauty is so exulted that the goddess Venus becomes

jealous. As punishment Psyche is sent to marry a monstrous beast “[not] sprung from a bloodline is humans – Only a fell, snake-like beast, wild, sadistic, and cruel.” (trans. Relihan 10). Psyche bravely faces her fate but upon seeing her beauty Cupid (who was to escort her to her doom) defies her mother’s wishes and decides to take and marry her herself.



**Cupid and Psyche by Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1792)**

By day Psyche is served by invisible servants and by night her husband, who remains faceless and nameless, enters her bed chambers. One day, after begging to see her sisters, they jealously convince Psyche to look upon the face of her husband, despite his admonitions not to. Psyche does so and as she is looking upon the face his inhumanly handsome face, oil from her lamp



splashes onto his shoulder and wakes him. Cupid leaves Psyche and in despair she attempts to drown herself in a river, but the river will not allow her. Venus finds out about Psyche and attempts to kill her by setting three impossible tasks. If she succeeds then she will be with Cupid again. With help she is successful in all except the final task. Upon returning from the underworld with Persephone's beauty in a box, Psyche's curiosity gets the better of her and she opens it despite specific instructions not to. She falls unconscious and it is only through Cupid's pleas to Juno (Zeus) that Psyche is brought back to life and is made immortal (sum. Relihan).

It has been suggested by Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton that Apuleius got his ideas from early Hindu stories, however there is little to no evidence of that (Accardo 53). However, if this was true it would support the idea that certain basic archetypes appear repeatedly within certain motifs. These characters encompass basic archetypes that are the basis for later fairy tale characters. In the following passage Pasquale Accardo suggests that:

“What is just as often ignored is the extent to which the themes that recur throughout Apuleius’ novel prefigure almost all the major fairy-tale themes: the simpleton who succeeds, the youngest child who surpasses the older siblings, the evil witch/stepmother (Venus), the king elves, helpful animals, insects and birds, cannibalistic ogre (Cupid, the dragon/serpent), terrifying beasts, the clumsy, stupid giant (Lucius as an ass), tales that provide unending feasts, invisibility, captivating music, magical transformations, shrews that need to be tamed, seven-league boots (rapid travel), and enchanted swords and clubs to vanquish



any opposing powers. The literary Apuleius might be considered the father of the entire fairy-tale genre.” (Accardo 48).

Thus, Accardo *argues* that the basic characteristics of Cupid and Psyche transcends generations, appearing in ever popular tales such as Beauty and the Beast, East of the Sun and West of the Moon and King Kong. Psyche’s royal family can be applied perfectly within the modern world, and isn’t that the defining element of the archetype? You’ll never see the embodiment of an archetype, but you will see the recurring symbol of one. Jung used the terms “motifs” and “primordial images” to stand for “archetypes,” saying that “the archetype is a tendency to form such a representations of a motif – representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. There are, for instance, many representations of the motif of the hostile brethren, but the motif remains the same.” (qtd. Snider 4,5).

The role of the wicked stepmother that has become the staple in fairy tales makes her first appearance in *Metamorphoses* in the form of Venus. She enlists her son Cupid to destroy Psyche, her rival in beauty. Venus’ antagonism towards Psyche incites Cupid’s clandestine marriage to Psyche, resulting in Venus’ jealousy of Psyche. His mother then turns him into an unseen presence that impels Psyche to believe that her husband is a monstrous beast. The idea is encouraged by her jealous sisters who envy Psyche’s God-husband and beautiful palace. These archetypal characters are manifested repeatedly until the wicked step-mother and sisters become the typical fairy tale antagonists.

Looking at Stith Thompson's book on studying folktales, he examines Wilhelm Grimm's explorations into how these resemblances and identical plots can be explained within myth and fairy tales.

“[Myth's] significance has long been lost, but it is still felt and imparts values to the story, while satisfying the natural pleasure in the wonderful ... as gentler and more human manners develop themselves and the sensuous richness of fiction increases, the mythical element retires into the background and begins to shroud itself in the mists of distance, which weaken the distinctness of the outlines but enhance the charms of the fiction.” (qtd. Thompson 370)

This suggests that all folktales are broken down myths. Thompson later goes on to create a classification index that lists all the various ‘types’ of folktales and myths, thus allowing for “recognition of these resemblances ... [that] brings scholar[s] closer to an understanding of human culture.” (Thompson 6). The tale of Beauty and the Beast is a ‘type’ of myth that recurs. It suggests that there is a common theme of taming ‘bestial’ love of ‘savage’ love throughout many cultures.

### **Beyond the Archetypes: Till We Have Faces**

C. S. Lewis' novel *Till We Have Faces* does not aim to create a fairy tale. Rather in his novel we see Lewis fleshing out and developing the original myth from the point of view of Psyche's sister. Lewis states that “nothing was further from my aim than to recapture the peculiar quality of the

*Metamorphoses* – that strange compound of picaresque novel, horror, comic, mystagogue’s [sic] tract, pornography, and stylistic experiment.” (Lewis 313) Lewis’ narrative differs from myth in that the psychology of the characters plays a major role. For example, the royal family in Lewis’ version would fit perfectly in the modern day: “Redival, the rebellious, slightly slutty daughter; Psyche, the saintly one; Orual, the misfit; and Trom, the abusive father.” (Meyers 184). In addition, myths always deal with the fantastical. Lewis changes these unexplainable occurrences so that they inhabit dreams and visions.



**Cupid Finding Psyche by Sir Edward- Burne Jones (1866)**

C. S. Lewis’ novel *Till We Have Faces* is the same myth but retold from the point of view of one of the sisters. What makes it different from Apuleius’

version is instead of a fairy tale-like setting, *Till We Have Faces* is specifically set in a country called Glome that are ruled by kings who have names and faces. This brings a sense of realism; the reader is under the illusion that the narrator is in real place and time bringing us into a literary world.

The most important deviation from Apuleius's version is that Lewis makes Psyche's palace invisible to her sister's eyes. Orual cannot see it because at first it "seems that Orual is too hard-headed, too much of a realist, too scientifically objective, to enter into Psyche's fantasy." Orual chooses what "data [she] will pay attention to, and which she will ignore." (Myers 64) In the myth there is the assumption that fantastical things are everyday commonplace occurrences. Lewis' character Orual denies these magical reasoning and explanations. Her vehement refusal of Psyche's offer to get her husband to enable Orual to see the invisible castle: "I don't want it. I hate it. Hate it, hate it" is evidence of her closed mind (Lewis 124). This is quite unlike myths where magical explanations are accepted and are seen as rational.

Apuleius reveals a myth that enlightens us with stories that bear no realism and are told from an omniscient point of view. This distances the audience from the characters. In contrast, Lewis tells us his tale from a first person narrative. From Apuleius' omniscient point of view the reader is able to observe everything within the worlds of the Gods and the mortals. The reader is present in every scene and we are able to follow Psyche through her trials and tribulations. We are privy to thoughts and deeds, and the political, self-centered squabbling that the Gods take part in. In *Till We Have Faces* the

reader is exposed to only a biased perspective, limited to only what Orual knows. The private lives of the Gods remain just that, private. We don't get an insider look into the marriage of Psyche and Cupid, only glimpses. This allows us for a more realistic viewpoint and "certainly more modern, for twentieth-century authors play on our awareness that knowledge is partial and witnesses often unreliable." (Myers 150) We are immersed in a world of empirical fact; everything that a myth encompasses (magic, gods, miracles) may exist but is not touched upon in Lewis' novel. Instead, Lewis attempts to reconcile myth with "real things" which explains the tension between reason and imagination throughout the book. (Schakel 111)

### **The Development of the Romantic Fairy Tale: Beauty and the Beast**

The type of comic romance to which 'Psyche and Cupid' belongs is a compilation of translated stories that are now known only through later retelling. "The connection of old women's speech and the consolatory, erotic, often fanciful fable appears deeply intertwined in language itself, and with women's speaking roles, as the etymology of 'fairy' illuminates." (Warner 14). Thus, the concept of the 'fairy tale' emerges through recycled and evolving retellings.

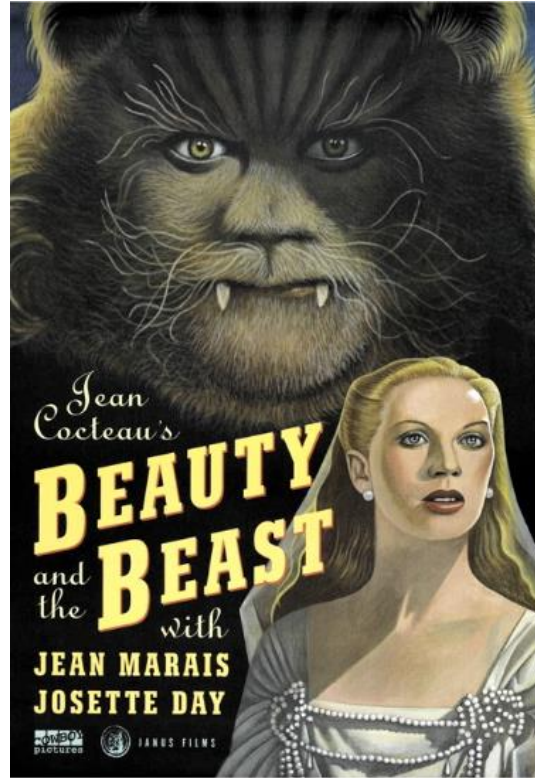
Beauty and the Beast has manifested from Apuleius' version to encompass the woman's voyage of inner discovery. "The demotion of the god who takes on human form and is imagined to be a beast, to a real beast who is an enchanted human being, has retained intact the successful form of the original story that has significantly diluted its deeper meaning" which is "[the] loving

encounter between persons whose natures, whose level of being, are fundamentally different (Accardo 86). Simple put – Beauty is a human girl and the Beast is an animal, yet they learn to love one another. This manifestation of man to Beast can be seen in the emergence of Madame Leprince de Beaumont’s famous rendition of *Beauty and the Beast* written during the mid-eighteenth century.” (Warner 297)

The fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* deviates from both Apuleius’ myth and Lewis’ novel in that Psyche’s lover is *not* a beast. He is only concealed from her. She is actually wrong to fear him. In many ways “the inner structure of the Beauty and the Beast tale reverses the roles defined by the title – she has to learn the higher (human) wisdom of seeing past outward appearances, to grasp that monstrosity lies in the eye of the beholder, while the beast turns out to be irresistibly beautiful and the highest good.” (Warner 275) The myth of Cupid and Psyche has a deeper meaning lying under the simple story: “The name [Psyche] invites such a response, of course. Psyche is the Greek word for “soul”; the story from the first has been allegorized as the human soul’s quest for love.” (Schakel 5) The fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* on the other hand is *not* allegorical and instead focuses on the female audience of the time.

“Romance – love in marriage – was an elusive ideal, which the writer of the *contes* sometimes set up in defiance of destiny ... The fairy tale of *Beauty and the Beast* assumed a female audience on the whole who fully expected to be given away by their fathers to men who might well strike them as monsters. The social revolution which has established both romantic and companionate marriage as the norm irreversibly altered the reception of such romances, and

ironically transformed certain women's examination of their matrimonial lot into materialistic propaganda for making a good marriage. (Warner 278)



**Jean Cocteau's Beauty and the Beast (1946)**

Further, Cocteau's film *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) concentrates on awakening Beauty to the goodness of the Beast; "she has to see his unsightliness to the gentle and loving human being trapped inside." (*La Belle et la Bête*, Warner 295). The beast's anthropomorphic shape in the film, half man and half human, intensify the Beast's pitiful dilemma: his male desires deserve the reciprocating love a woman who would see past their eyes and listen to their heart.



The film concentrates on “men’s anguish in the face of female indifference, on the tenderness of masculine desire and the cruelty of the female response, rather than women’s vulnerability to male violence.” (ibid, 296). The mysterious femininity of the enchanted castle serves as the counterpart to the Beast’s savage masculinity. Without its feminine counterpart, the Beast cannot survive,



**La Belle et la Bête (1946)**

Interestingly, at the end of the movie, when the Beast is turned back into a man his human face is the same as the former rejected, aspiring lover Avenant. “So *La Belle et la Bête* traces a promise to male lovers that they will not always be rejected, that human lovers, however profligate, can be saved,” (ibid. 297). Mmme. Beaumont’s telling of Beauty and the Beast (of which *La Belle et la Bête* is based) has inspired the idea of female love and sympathy saving the man from the beast inside of him. To this day it continues to



inspire; however, I suggest that because historical context changes with time, so much must the tale change.

Alternatively, Betsy Hearne states, “the conditions determining the fate of Psyche and Beauty are totally different: Beauty’s is a test of the perception of the heart and mind, while Psyche, repeatedly characterized as simple of mind, is tested to blind obedience ...” (Hearne 11). In Jessica Tiffin’s book *Marvelous Geometry*, she goes into length of the interchangeability and a lack thereof of myth and fairy tale. She touches on Max Lüthi’s work and his formalist theory of ‘*isolation*’ in which fairy tale figures are separated from any background or context. “Their psychological processes are not illuminated: only their line of progress is in focus, only that which is relevant to the action,” says Lüthi (qtd. Tiffin 15). Ursula Le Guin furthers this idea in her discussion of Jungian archetype in fantasy. She argues that, “in fairy tale ... there is no ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ there is a different standard, which is perhaps best called ‘appropriateness’ ... Under the conditions of fairy tale, in the language of archetypes, we can say with perfect conviction that it may be *appropriate* to [push an old lady into an oven].” She is suggesting why fairy tales (or we should say certain mythic motifs) survive over time and throughout a wide range of cultures.

That said, at the same time fairy tales are difficult to read symbolically because it is not an allegory. It *derives* from the allegory. The motifs, rather than meaning something specific, have resonance with the reader. Ursula Le Guin puts this another way: “a symbol is not a sign of something known, but an indicator of something not known and not expressible other than

symbolically. [Students] mistake symbol (living meaning) with allegory (dead meanin)” (qtd. From Tiffin). There may be allegory inside the fairy tale, but as Gay Clifford puts it, “the allegorist wants to communicate certain generalized formulations about the nature of the human experience ... and shapes his narrative so as to reveal these.” (qtd. From Tiffin 16)

In review, the tale of the Beauty and the Beast has had specific significance throughout the ages. In mythological form it is a tale of the soul’s quest for love. As we progress in time there is a search for deeper, psychological meaning within the myth. C. S. Lewis attempts this in his novel *Till We Have Faces*. In large part he succeeds as we get an insider’s look into the why and how of the original myth. However, we miss out the omniscient point of view that the original myth provides. Lastly, there are the fairy tales that derive from the myths and allegories. Fairy tales constantly adapt to the historical context around them. They take the bits and pieces from the original myth in order to make a familiar tale that will resonant with current audiences.

An interesting study and/or observation would be to look at a pocketbook and modern romance (e.g. Harlequin Romances, Silhouette Romances, popular suspense novels, etc.).



**Harlequin *SuperRomance* from 1990's**

The bad boy who's in touch with his 'inner beast' is a constant attraction to females who believe they can 'tame' him. Could this be a modern rendition of Beauty and the Beast?"

It could be ...

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## ***Seeing Stars in the Paris Night Sky by Rose Lang***

[**Paris**] When catastrophe besets us it is hard to imagine good. But we first have to be able to imagine good ... then goodness might manifest even in the midst of catastrophe.

Sort of like the philosopher Frankl describing the beauty of springtime from behind barb wire and downwind from the crematoria. It is a question of understanding what good might mean to us, even in the midst of catastrophe.

When the roof of our beloved Notre Dame caught fire and the flames lit up the night sky it was the end of the world for Paris. But good did come of this catastrophe, for when the flames were finally extinguish our Grand Cathedral still stood ... just without its roof. I had watched this great catastrophe from my balcony.

Although the smoke drifted in that day, I kept my French doors open. It was a religious experience of sorts for me ... the odor of the burning timber a sort of incense. The day after we *Parisiennes* began its reconstruction. I can still smell the smoke.

It is from this same balcony that my grandmother heard the distant guns firing towards Paris in 1915. It is from here she glimpse President Wilson in his car as he drove by in 1919. It is from here that she first set eyes on my grandfather, when her eldest brother brought him home from the *gare nord* to meet the family in January of 1923.

It is from this same place that my grandmother last set tearful eyes on her love when he left her forever in the summer of 1939. It is from this balcony that she wept of the tragic news of the summer of 1940 and from where she watched the Bosch goosestep into Paris ... and later threw kisses down upon General Charles de Gaulle and the Allied and French armies that had come to liberate Paris.

It is from this balcony that my mother watched the street riots of 1968 while she held me in her arms breast feeding me ... and it is from here that I grew up looking down and admiring this great city.

Each night I watch the endless and silent stream of ambulances that take the day's Covid-19 dead from the hospitals to the city morgue. Today Paris is once again deadly quiet ... a quiet that I am told has not been heard since the summer of 1940. Sadly, at night the lights of Paris are dimmed and the streets all but empty ... not even the cats go out. Our doors are all locked and people are scared even to breath!

My grandfather, an emigrant from near Krakow in Poland, came to this metropolis not soon after the 'Great Battle' to save Warsaw. Most people, even Europeans, have never heard of the 'Great Battle.' When you mention it, which people rarely ever do any more, it is assumed by the listener that it was some struggle from the 1940's. But alas they would be wrong by two decades and half of Europe.

The ‘Great Battle’ to save Warsaw occurred in the early 1920’s, while Europe and Paris was being swept by the Spanish Flu that killed many millions around the world. Poland had come into a renewed existence in the aftermath of the 1919 Paris Peace Treaty and right from its beginning the Red Army tried to gobble back up a free and independent Poland.

Yet even in the midst of the Spanish Flu, a pandemic equaled only by the medieval plague, the new-born Polish State was saved from ignominy by a few thousand brave men who came from all over Europe – Frenchmen, Austrians, Englishmen and, of course, many young Poles who fought to remain free. The Frenchmen, Austrians, Englishmen were fresh from the trenches of the Great War ... and had just a short time before been at odds with each other, but now they were the experienced ones, the officers, commanding a very inexperienced army of Polish volunteers, torn from the arms of their mothers in many cases and barely able to shave. And many of these young men did not live to see the day their beards would grow!

These young Poles fought against impossible odds and pushed back the Red Army and so a proud Warsaw lived on for nearly two decades, free and happy, before a great catastrophe beset it, first from the West and then from the East.

A Polish Home Army was there to fight a second and a third ‘Great Battle’ and while they were brave and determined their entire world crumbled into dust. Some stood beside Frankl while he spoke of philosophy and the need to go on living, some shook the hand of St. Peter, and some were buried for ever under the rubble that had snuffed their lives out, brought down upon them by

the murderous Stukas from the West and the silence of the artillery from the East. Can there really be a distinction?

In the 1920's the 'Great Battle' had been won. And from it emerged a brave Pole, my grandfather. He was a young man with wanderlust. He had grown up in a distant, provincial corner of Poland, not that far east of Krakow. It was a world of thatched huts and nesting storks. It was a world of horse drawn carts and dusty country roads.

But it was a world that he no longer belonged to, for his older brother had stole it all away from him when their father had died suddenly of a heart attack, while the younger of his two sons had been off bravely fighting for God and country. My great grandfather had tried to argue sense into his eldest son, but he would not have any of it. The father had a young, prodigal son ... his eldest wanted it all.

With a peace earned, hearing the news of the death of his father, my young grandfather set his sights for home, bringing with him two French friends, whom he had fought alongside, on that long train ride south from Warsaw to Krakow. The two Frenchmen had hoped to winter over in Poland before returning to Paris in the spring time. It was the last week of December when they arrived at the small farm and they were farther from home than my grandfather was. But my grandfather knew he owed these two for their magnanimity.



But my grandfather had returned home unannounced and unwelcomed. While the Frenchmen could barely understand the cruel words ... they could understand the harsh drama unleashed by the eldest on his young brother.

*Une petite bien* ...that came out of the 'Great Battle' is that a young Polish man would toil and fight beside some wanderlust Frenchmen who thought so much of him, his loyalty and his bravery that after that conflict was over, and the guns had gone silent, and after the harsh drama of the unwelcomed Christmas of 1922 they would invite my grandfather to come with them to Paris.

They taught him some French. They dressed him in a French Uniform, they gave him some papers ... off the body of one of their kinsmen ... and then smuggled him across Europe to Paris in a train of returning French soldiers.

And in Paris he would stay for the rest of his life. In Paris of the 1920's he found love, became a husband and then a father and when duty called him a second time, in 1939, he again put on a French uniform, this time at the invitation of his new home *La Republique Française*. He fought valiantly a second time and died defending the honor of both Poland and Paris.

Yet, it was only recently that I finally really got to know my grandfather ... for the great catastrophe of our day, that invisible one that could well become the 'Great Battle' of our day ... forced me to close the modest apartment in Paris that my family have lived in since the 1900's, and put dust covers on all the furniture, with the hope that I may once again return, when life perhaps

returns to normal. I had lost my job and could not pay the bank what I owe from my business loans and so they put a paper against my house. I had until the end of March to pay up or vacate.

It was on the last afternoon of that month when we were moving the great brass bed I sleep on, a 19<sup>th</sup> century family heirloom that was where my grandmother was born, where my mother was born and even where I was born too (such traditions are familial) that I finally got to know my grandfather.

I was born three decades after he had bravely lost his life to the screams of the stukas and the massacre of the bombs that rained out of the sky. Yet I know him better now than any time in the past.

As the movers were lifting the heavy head stand of my brass bed it tipped over and off popped the top ornament. To my great surprise inside the hollowness of the bed were secreted an old silk stocking wrapping a packet of old love letters and of jewelry that my grandmother had kept well hidden.

My grandmother is also long since gone and so as I sat there and read the letters. As I admired and counted the diamonds and pearls I remembered how she would tell me that they had been well to do in the 1930's and that I, her granddaughter, would never have to worry, as she had later had to do, as long as I slept in this great brass bed.

The top ornament had a cross on it and I assumed that it was the cross that would provide for my safety and wellbeing. But now I understood. That

afternoon I phoned the bank and told them to go to the devil ... I would take my business elsewhere.

That night as I sat on my balcony reading the letters by candle light, I looked up and for the first time in my five decades of life ... I saw stars in the night sky over Paris.

## ***What Are Prairie Oysters? by William Webster***

When I was fifteen I was invited by a family friend to spend time on their farm to help them out for a few weeks. I was a city boy who had never been on a farm.

The first few days I learned how to collect the eggs, and help in the garden plot. The second week I helped in the fields to bail hay. That week was hard work! The third week I worked in and around the barn and helped with the milking.

It was the second day of the last week I remember the most. That day my friend, her older sister and I were sent out to ‘cut the calves’. She brought a large pail of homemade beer. I thought that it was for when we got thirsty ... I had no idea!

She told me we were to lead them one by one into a strange looking metal contraption. It looked menacing and made a kerchank kerchank sound.

When the first calf was in the cage a couple of the hired hands grabbed levers which turned the cage on its side. Kerchank kerchank.

Then they pulled the calf’s back legs out of the way and sprayed some white liquid on its scrotum. The calf’s penis was pink and in full view.

My friend's sister, who was a few years older than I was, turned to me and said with a big grim on her face "you'll like this next bit for sure!"

I had no idea what she was intimating but I knew instinctively that it had to be something sinister.

Suddenly one of the men pulled out a sharp knife and grabbed the calf's scrotum tight, pulled it away from the calf's penis and with one deft 'cut' ... castrated the calf. It wailed and flailed widely but was caught securely in the contraption.

I convulsed with a gut wrenching spasm as if I was the calf and nearly threw up! She watched me react and started to laugh!

Kerchank Kerchank.

I turned and wanted to walk away but she grabbed my shirt. "Where are you going? This is only the first one."

I stood there sick to the stomach. My testicles started to throb and ache. I closed my eyes but I could not close my ears.

Kerchank, kerchank,

I heard another calf wail,

Kerchank kerchank ... then a third.

Then I heard her say, “ ... there can only be one or two bulls in the herd. Otherwise nature would go wild.”

When she said this I slowly turned back ... kerchank kerchank ... and watched as they castrated the next calf.

It slowly dawned on me that what they were doing was neither cruel nor senseless. It made perfect sense.

The two hired hands had been watching our little drama. They threw her the next fresh scrotum. She dug her hand in ... separating the testicles from the sac ... threw the testicles in a pail filled with the homemade beer and then just threw away the sac at her feet. She was not squeamish. Obviously she had done this many times before.

I watched as blood dripped down her hands. She seemed to read my mind. “It could be worst.”

Kerchank, kerchank.

“And how’s that?” My voice seemed strangely alien as I squeaked out the words.

She laughed. “It’s just cutting. You could have to lead the lambs to their slaughter ... when the lambs seem to know!”

But the calves were meekly lined up waiting their turn, watching.

Kerchank, kerchank.

Surely they understood?

Kerchank, kerchank.

Yes ... my job that afternoon was to herd the calves to their castration.

Once they were ‘cut’ they were let out of the contraption to roam freely. There was no stitching of the skin where they took their balls and sac. It was all left open to heal. There was surprisingly very little bleeding.

We cut a good hundred that day. For me the afternoon could not pass fast enough.

After the butchery had ended we three walked silently back from the barn. She carried the pail, and said that ‘a special treat’ awaited us for dinner.

Naïve me, I had no clue.

She cooked “prairies oysters” for dinner that night! They were fried testicles. I felt sick to the stomach. I could not eat dinner. Instead I went for a long walk.

Their dog tagged along knowing I was upset and needing male companionship. While we walked along I could not help but notice he still had a pair. But I guess there was only one of him on the farm and three of his bitches. The dog and I only returned back to the farm house well after dark.

There she was waiting for me on the porch with two egg salad sandwiches and a mountain dew. I sat down next to the sister and she offered me the plate.

“I’m sorry. I guess it would have been too strange for you to eat prairies oysters after just watching them being “harvested.”

I nodded. I had just finished half of the first sandwich when she did something I had not expected. She reached over and through the front of my jeans began to caress me.

She leaned over and whispered into my ear. “My brother tells me the first time he helped with the cutting ... his balls ached for a whole week.”

When she said this I nearly gagged on my sandwich.



Twenty years later the sound still gets to me. I swear it's the same sound the subway trains make as they take a turn here in the New York City underground. Kerchank ... kerchank.

## ***Let All Sins be Forgotten by Patrick Bruskiewich***

He sat with only the glow of his monitor illuminating his face. The rest of the room was dark. It was well past three in the morning and he was tired. He hadn't slept in four days. He felt euphoric and exhausted at the same time. He hesitated sending the upload command.

He paused to ask himself ... 'did this meet the criteria of the *Manifesto*?'

- 1) No one shall be physically harmed.
- 2) Save the Salmon.
- 3) Let them eat Zucchini.

He smirked. I guess what he was about to do met the first two criteria. Yes the third criteria was kooky but then hasn't the world become a bit too kooky, too?

The third criteria was in actual fact a stale joke. He never touched the stuff. Zucchini reminded him of his penultimate girlfriend, Brie. The middle of last year she had helped him set down his *Save the Salmon Manifesto*. Brie was a radical vegetarian that let her hair grow long, on her head, under her armpits, on her legs and between her navel and her knees. She was quite a jungle even for *Une Bohemienne*.

It was a bit silly that a woman who swore off milk would be named after fermented cheese. But in so many ways Brie was silly! Her absurdity was

perhaps what first drew him to her, he being a bit reckless as well. At first he didn't mind her addiction ...She ate Zucchini like it was the source of eternal life. But then he noticed she even started to turn a bit green at the edges and to smell like the stuff.

In the midst of intimacy he had noticed how she even tasted like the stuff, and that her soft folds were turning vernal. He felt obliged to crack a joke about that. She kicked him in his family jewels. That was the last time they were intimate. They broke up a few days later. What a row they had had.

A shudder went down his spine when he remembered this. It was ickiness by association. He could still hear the jingle-jangle of her beads, sacred crystals and hallowed mantras. He could live with all that, but he drew the line with her *Zucchs*!

It hadn't taken him long after first meeting her to realize that Brie blamed men for everything. Pollution, consumption, over population and war. He tried to remind her that half the world was not male. But she would not listen. Women were goddesses ... she would yap. Then she would pounce him, afraid he would dash.

He was less inclined to be so judgmental. He knew quite a few women who intimated, consumed and yes, messed up the world. They were the ones who made their faces up, did their nails fancy and went in search of good prices around town in their *mobiles*. Then Brie would always fixate on war, and then they would fight! He shook his head. He couldn't believe that had been

together for three years. Towards the end time slowed to a crawl. It was like he had known her forever.

In the end her radicalism ultimately wasn't his! What was the expression ...  
*'two progressives that progress together stay together.'*

He shuddered a second time, this time in a different part of his anatomy. Brie had left him for a better put down. The other guy was the head of the RZL – the Radical Zucchini League. He claimed that planting enough Zucchini would feed the world. But he knew the real reason why she had left. She was hypersexual. He was tired!

His latest love interest well, she's not a radical but instead a normal type who is trying to rebel from her boring life. Tiffany seems to like the thrill of his friendship with her. He knew that and so he wondered how long that would last. He had a plan with her. Get her to stop making up her face. Get her to leave her nails plain. Get her to shop the secondary market just like him ... and get her to enjoy the life of the roly-poly set. It was his mantras to transform her into *Une Bohemienne*.

And the sex thing. He wanted to try something different for a change. "*Cross your legs and wait until you are married!*" he had told her, which made her even more amorous. If anything would cement their accord it would be this. He wanted her, but he didn't want her to know that. She wanted him, at any cost. It was driving her crazy.

He hadn't yet reached the point to trust her with the truth and so he trusted Tiffany with the make believe. She did not know about his *Manifesto*. Instead it was his street art that she seemed to fixate on, a convenient Banksy that was all her own. Sure, Tiffany was a snow flake, but she was not that complicated and he was tired of complications. Only one thing really mattered to him ... *Save the Salmon!*

The only serious thing he had asked Tiffany was 'did she like Zucchini?'

"Eeeck Zucchini!" was her reply. She did not eat fish.

That was three months ago.

He leaned back in his chair, waited a few more seconds and then reached forward with his right hand and with pained deliverance sent the upload command. The 120 Gigs of data disappeared into the dark web. He did his best work in the dark.

He had slowly and meticulously tapped into the financial stream of all the sushi restaurants in Vancouver, taking note of the patrons who ordered salmon sushi. He had collected their charge card and debit particulars. It hadn't been hard for him to do for he had done a Masters in mathematics with prime numbers, with coding as his minor. Cracking the encoding had been a snap.

Now he was going to *Save the Salmon*.

The upload went to a network of white knights scattered around the globe who would empty the back accounts of the salmon sushi eaters here in Vancouver ... it would all be done on a single afternoon of a Friday of a long weekend far off shore and with such a footprint that the black knights would shrug their shoulders and say it wasn't worth their time and effort. If it was just one white knight they would roll up their sleeves and hack at it ... but it was more like ten to one; for each ten salmon sushi eaters there was one white knight.

Each was a solitary hack with a limit of under \$ 7,000, under the criminal or civil prosecution threshold. Besides ... the proceeds of their solitary hack would be sent to local charities. They were all little Robins in the big, dark and bad forest helping out the growing multitudes of the poor.

By choice he was one of them ... the poor, that is. He got up to pluck a few leaves off his mint plant to make himself a cup of tea.

He smiled as he thought that it would take the black knights about two weeks to sort out where the hacks occurred ... at the sushi restaurants in Vancouver. Then they would take a few more days to realize it was all about salmon sushi. Who would trust the sushi restaurants in Vancouver to serve them salmon sushi ever again? That would be the icing on the cake.

It's the hypocrisy of it all! Claiming to be environmentalists while they devour and destroy the salmon fisheries! How Suzuki of them ...

It was nearly four in the morning when he returned to his monitor. There were two message blinking on him. One was from Tiffany ... that would wait and the second from *Cubes*.

Three letters ... LOX ... he smiled ... *lot on exchange*.

He didn't know who *Cubes* was. He knew deep down that *Cubes* could be trusted. They had worked well together on other white knight things in the past.

He sipped his mint tea contentedly, then opened Tiffany's message. He flushed.

*Holy Bill Gibson!* She sure doesn't take NO for an answer!

He shrugged his tired shoulders and messaged her back asking her over the following morning for breakfast. Deep down, he felt so alone. He needed Tiffany's company.

'Let all sins be forgotten' he thought. Then he closed his eyes and fell fast asleep.

## ***Half-Girl and Half-Boy ... by Isabella Montsouris***

[**Montreal**] I have a friend who is a bit mixed up. It's really not *their* fault. It is just that they came into the world not as an XX or an XY ... but as an XXY. Yes ... you read it correct ... half girl and half boy!

So how can I describe this unique person; Are they a she ... or a he? Is it a *they*?

*They* are a sibling of a female friend of mine. The friend is not really that close to me, but their sibling has sort of saddled up to me the past few months and I thought that not merely writing in my diary what I was feeling ... but that I would put words to paper and see it is published in *Le Minotaure*, so *they* could appreciate my thoughts.

To begin perhaps a few words about me. I am an artist in my twenties. I am bisexual, depending on my moods and appetites. A great deal depends on who I am with at any particular moment. Being bisexual means that if I want to I can wear a nice tight black cocktail dress and go to upscale restaurants with men who fancy themselves as bulls, and then the next night dress up in old jeans and end that night buckled into a strap on being a bull myself on my *lust* interest...

It is all about *lust* and *thrust* ... who said boys have all the fun!



*They* are a few years younger than I am. It is hard for me to know just how much younger for the usual anatomical clues are missing, or mixed-up. If I am going to continue with this story I have to give XXY a name don't I? I could just share with you the name they go by but then odds are you might stumble across them at some gathering here in Montreal and then that pussy cat would be out of the bag. So let me call them ... KT (short for Kitty ... the cat metaphor will meow itself later in this story).

KT is still trying to sort out a preference, for unlike me and my strap on, KT has a huge clitoris, bigger than the penises on some boys I have let fiddle-diddle me. How do I know? KT did it with me and then later saw it ... and told me a little about their unique life.

KT grew up with a brother and a sister, and is the middle child. Within their household KT's mother could accept the ambiguity, but the father could not. KT's mother was very supporting of the circumstances. The father kept on insisting 'something must be done ...' to make KT into a *proper* girl, or a *proper* boy.

Luckily, despite paternal pressures, KT's doctors let KT wait until the teenage years before deciding ... does KT want to be a girl or a boy?

It seems KT had the best of both worlds, a large clitoris that looked very much like a penis, the distinct absence of a scrotum, and a small vagina. This makes me wonder what makes a girl ... a girl, or a boy ... a boy?

KT waited until puberty to see what might happen. By fifteen when KT hadn't yet menstruated KT went to a specialist who did an ultrasound and found that there was a uterus and two ovaries inside KT's body and two small testicles as well (the size of peanuts) that had not descended. That left KT unable to menstruate because of the tug of war between the female and male sex hormones.

It has been a few years now and KT is still undecided. I suspect this is why KT decided to saddle up with me. KT knows that I am a bisexual ... and open minded. But my knowing KT is rather unique even for me!

I met KT at a party almost two years ago. KT came to the party with his sister and when the sister left to make the rounds I was left in a dark corner talking with KT. At the time I had no clue about the ambiguity. KT dresses like a boy and so I thought ... 'here's my friend's younger brother.' Being with a 'brother' of a girl friend leaves one with a safe feeling that no matter how intimate things might get, things would not swing to the weird.

I was in a mood that night and sensed that KT was in one too so we ducked out the back and went for a walk. I had drunk a bit too much and just had a bad break up and KT seemed to sense my angst. We talked around things. I sort of took an interest in KT and before I knew it I had let KT kiss me ... or maybe it was I who kissed KT. We happened upon a picnic table at a park and before I knew it KT was petting my boobs through my blouse. I unbuttoned my blouse and slipped my brassiere up and let my boobs free and KT was caressing them.

I had never done it in a public place like a park before. It was a real turn on.

I was wet between my legs so I sat on KT's lap but not before I slipped out of my panties. There I was straddling across KT's lap and KT froze. Usually a boy would be pawing me between my legs by then but KT just froze. I reached down between my legs and unbuckled the belt on KT's pants then got up and turned my back to KT as I leaned across the picnic table.

I could hear the buckle on KT's pants jangle as they were brought down and then felt soft flesh against my backside. I was expecting the thrust of something between my legs and into the wetness of me ...

Instead I felt a tickle as some flesh rubbed against the sensitive skin of my vagina. I thought boy is he small, so I turned and without looking down I let KT thrust into me from the front. Again there was a strange tickle and not a thrust. I had experienced a similar sensation before when I was *au pares* but never did I feel this sensation with a boy.

It then dawned on me to reach down and I felt a prominence, what I thought was a penis, but there was not much to it. I felt some empty skin beneath the prominence. A rush came over me; this boy had not balls, and so can't make a baby! I lost my head and wanted him to thrust deep inside of me.

I pressed KT closer to me and kissed him hard thinking maybe his erection would respond to this. KT did get a bit bigger ... I could feel that ... and was

able to just poke into my vagina. I thrust my hips forward as far as I could and could feel KT's warm flesh against my wetness.

We grinded against each other and I had an orgasmic flood that spilled down the inside of my legs. As I was feeling all this rush of emotion I looked keenly into KT's face and saw even in the dim light a flush and blush to match.

When it was all over I leaned back and looked down and then realized that KT was not a big boy .... but why should that matter to me. I kneeled down and wanted to flute KT then and there but no ... KT pushed me away, turned round, pulled up his pants and started to rush off, almost in hysterics.

I chased after KT but KT disappeared into the night. I went back to look for my panties but could not find them. Then it dawned on me KT had grabbed them, maybe stuffed them in his pocket and ran off with them as a keepsake.

I guessed KT had never done anything like this before. I smiled ... that sort of meant something didn't it.

Two days later my girlfriend caught up to me and asked what had happened between KT and me the night of the party. So I told her. She was strangely quiet and unbelieving.

"Is KT ok?" I asked.

She shrugged her shoulders. “KT wants to come and talk with you.” This was said without emphasis.

I was strangely apprehensive. “Sure he can come ...”

A flicker of a smile passed across her face when I said ‘he.’ “When?”

“How about this Friday night?”

“Where?”

“My place. Why don’t the two of you drop by?”

There was a pause as she thought it through. “I might come with KT, but I think the two of you need to be alone when you talk. KT is very private and very sensitive.”

I hesitated, trying to make sense to the private and sensitive thing. “Sure ...”

“Promise me you will not be judgmental!” Was this an older sister looking after a younger brother?

I really did not know what to expect ... and what happened was the unexpected.

I had heard of sexual ambiguity when we had studied genes in biology. A certain percentage of children are born XYY and XXY. The XYY are endowed with Down's syndrome and are easy to spot. Those endowed with XXY are less obvious. I suspect there are more XXY's than XYY's in the world, and that some of the XXY's are the Amazonian women in sports, but they may also some of the diminutive women that we see around us and take for granted ... small breasts, small hips and the like.

Friday evening came and around the time I expected them I was kept waiting. It was about a half hour later after when we had arranged to meet up that I heard a tentative knock at the door.

I opened the door. It was KT. "Come in ..." I looked past KT. He was alone.

"My sister is not coming. She drove me here but ... "

"But what?" I closed the door.

"We had a fight in the car. I didn't want her to come with me. She'll pick me up in an hour."

KT was wearing the same clothes as last time we met. I led the way in.

"Sorry about the mess," swinging my hand round my studio apartment.

KT looked around and saw my easel with a half-finished painting on it. “Oh, I forgot my sis told me you’re an artist. Here ...” right up front KT handed me back my panties. “I should not have taken them.”

“Do you want to keep them?” I smiled when I asked.

KT shook his head. “I just wanted to prove something to my sister.”

That piqued my curiosity. “Prove what?”

“That I could ...” KT lowered his eyes, “... ‘do it’ with a girl.” The way this was said KT did not seem boastful.

“Did you tell your sister who you ‘did it’ with?” I asked.

“No ... but I think she figured it out. That’s why she wanted to come with me.”

KT blushed suddenly. “There is something I want to ask you.”

“Yes ...” I responded politely, for I sensed it would be something important.

“Did you enjoy ...” KT paused “... ‘doing it’ with me?”

I felt my face flush. “Well yes to be perfectly honest, but ...”

KT's head shot up. "But what?"

"Can I make you some tea ... " It was the first thing that popped into my mind.

"But what!" KT was agitated.

"Coffee then ... I think we need to talk." I made us some instant coffee.

And so we sat and we did talk for about a half hour and as we talked KT opened up to me bit by little bit about why 'doing it' had been so different for both of us.

I thought to begin with KT was one of these lonely puppies. I have had a few and had learned the hard way how hard it was to get a lonely puppy to stray somewhere else. There was nothing worse than a boy who had 'done it' for the first time with you and then expected to marry you and have kids, and well, get on with some sort of 'familial bliss,' all because you felt pity on them and gave them their first split second of lust!

Boys have fragile personalities, more so than girls. And they frustrate so easily. Girls and boys cannot be 'just friends.' So when a lonely puppy expected more I would simply say 'we can't do it ... 'cause I was having my period' ... and then I would give them the 'luck' they wanted some other way, making sure they had to go home with a pair of mucked up pants.



I wondered about KT. Right up front I told KT we couldn't be 'friends with benefits,' if that's what *he* wanted. KT had a blank expression on his face when I said this, as if my words had not registered. The 'no friends with benefits' didn't seem to bother KT ... perhaps he wasn't a lonely puppy?

So I chose a different line. I told KT that when he thrust into me it felt so different than what I had felt before with other boys. It was when I said this KT slowly and quietly opened up to me.

"It seems," KT said to me, "I am both a girl and a boy ... at the same time. I am a hermaphrodite."

I remained silent and tried to set a neutral expression on my face. But even as a bisexual my insides were topsy-turvy. In retrospect I can only imagine how hard it was for KT to talk about being "both a girl and a boy" with a stranger.

KT went silent and then looked around my studio. KT got up and started to walk about, then did an unexpected thing. KT started to strip and then said "draw me."

On top there were small breasts, perhaps that of a fifteen year old girl. The hips were almost that of a girl about the same age. KT had no hair anywhere on the body except on the head and eye brows.

But where there should not be anything prominent there was a hybrid between a clitoris and a penis. KT had no scrotum, only two flaps of skin that could best be described as the unfinished beginnings of a labia major.

As I watched, KT's prominence began to get a little more noticeable. It seemed the thing to do, to start by drawing KT's prominence.



He looked up at me and asked “well ... what do you think?”

“I have never drawn anyone as ...” I had to choose the next word carefully, and I thought that I had “... *special* as you.”

But the word *special* set KT off. “Special ... special ... that’s what my mom calls me ... I am tired of the word special. Can’t you use another word instead?”

“Unique?”

KT chortled “that word sounds a bit too much like eunuch.”

“Then another word instead ...” I quickly said apologetically.

KT looked up at me almost sheepishly. “No ... unique will do. It sounds like eunuch and that is sort of what I am. I am a girl on the inside and a boy on the outside. But being half girl ... half boy means that I can never be a mother or a father; I don’t menstruate and I can’t produce sperm, but ...”“

“But what?”

KT looked up at me with an earnest expression. “The other day ... when we were ‘doing it’ ... I felt something.”

When KT said ‘felt something’ my heart skipped a beat. I suddenly realized that I was getting wet between my legs. I set down my pad and pencil and approached KT. “What did you feel?”

“I think I actually had an orgasm as I thrust into you.”

I was now standing directly in front of KT. “Did you. Did you really?” I was staring at the prominence. I could see it was throbbing with KT’s heart beat.

“Yes, and I think I may have actually even ejaculated.” When KT said this I looked up to see a giant smile on KT’s face. “It was the first time I had an

orgasm and the first time anything had squirted out of me. I have tried. Believe me I have. I have masturbated so often it's a wonder 'it' hasn't fallen off."

The way this was said even KT could not decide whether 'it' was a penis or a clitoris. KT had yet to figure out whether 'it' made KT a girl or a boy.

I reached over and touched it. KT shuddered at my touch. I had touched penises and clitorises before. KT's 'it' was clearly neither. I was curious to see what would happen so I started to caress 'it.' The two flaps of skin swayed lazily. Between the flaps there was a small flesh colored opening, obviously where KT peed.

As I continued to caress KT there was a quiet knock at the door. We both ignored the knock. Then after a few more seconds there was another more insistent knock. I stopped my caress.

"It's my sister ... her timing is always bad. Maybe you should let her in."

I turned and with my back to KT asked "shouldn't you put your clothes back on?"

"No, why ... she's seen me naked many times before. Besides if she asks, you have been drawing me haven't you?"

So I answered the door. Her sister did not seem surprised or upset to find KT standing there naked, but she did keep her back turned to KT when she stood in the studio.

“Doing some art I see.” There was an edge to her words.

I nodded.

“Should I come back a little later?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” I responded, “ask KT.”

KT was quiet.

“I don’t mind coming back a little later, if the two of you want some more alone time.” Sis looked over her shoulder at KT You seem to be getting along ...” then turned back to face me. “Are you the one KT ‘did it’ with the other day?”

“Sis! That’s the last time I am going to tell you personal things ever again!”  
KT was angry.

Sis turned and scowled in return and shot back “That’s what you have been saying for years.” In her frustration she took a swing with her hand and wacked KT’s prominence. KT flinched and covered ‘it’ with his hands.

“You know it is long past time for you to decide ... girl or boy ... girl or boy ... one or the other.”

Keeping the prominence covered, KT looked down at his ‘it.’ (I use the pronoun *his* because as KT did this it seemed like the right pronoun.)

Watching sis chastise KT like that made me hot and bothered, so I answered her. “Yes he did it with me the other day, and I rather enjoyed it. And I think KT wants to do it again ...”

“Well then I better be going!” She gave out a sigh.

She looked up and me and in almost a whisper said “when we were young I use to let KT play with me. Now he wants to play with someone else.”

Sis turned and started for the door. KT rushed to behind his sister and wrapped his arms around her. “Don’t be angry with me sis. If you were angry at me I would have no one in my life.”

It was then that I had a stroke of genius. I grabbed two big fluffy paint brushes and handed sis one.

“What’s this for?” KT had not yet let her go.

“You’ll see.” I tickled KT’s back with my brush. KT started to giggle. I painted down the small of his back, and KT started to arch his body. He let go of sis.

Sis turned around and watched what I was doing for a few seconds, indecisive as to what she should do next. Sis looked up at KT’s face and smiled. Instinctively I knew that KT’s eyes were closed. From where I was standing I could not see the expression on KT’s face, but I imagined it was a mix between pleading and pleasure, the type of expression I had seen on many a *lust* interest when we set off onto something adventurous.

I thought to myself how amazingly similar that expression is on the face of a girl and a boy ... as they reach resolution or fulfilment.

Then sis slowly started to tickle KT’s right breast. KT stood transfixed. By then I was down to the top of his buttocks.

I studied KT’s posterior. The shape of KT was somewhat more feminine than masculine. KT’s torso was not rectangular but shaped like a cello. KT’s bum was round like a woman’s not square and angular like a man’s. KT’s hips were more like a girl’s than a boy’s, as was the space between the thighs.

KT opened his legs a bit. Sis started to tickle his left breast. I started to tickle his thighs from behind and beneath. I could see goose bumps pop up all over KT’s body.

From the angle of her hand I could tell that sis was now painting KT's torso and stomach. I could see KT's buttocks starting to tense. I knew from experience that with a boy ... this was a prelude to resolution ...

I guess I was really curious to watch, so I knelt down and peered straight through KT's legs. This was an angle I had never seen before in either a man or woman. I could see the soft pink skin between KT's thighs. Along with the large hanging folds of skin, there was another small set of lips, and hidden away within the second fold was a pink crevice that was perhaps a very small vagina. Were it not for the prominence then KT might very much be a girl.

So I painted up between KT's legs ... the big and small lips, and the pinkness of KT ... just as sis was painting the prominence from in front.

KT started to sway back and forth and breath with a ragged "huff ... huff ... huff." We both knew to paint faster, much faster. Then after a few rapid seconds we heard KT take in a sudden breath and sort of meowed like a cat ... actually a *MEA*...then it happened.

Being teased and tickled this way by two girls was heaps too much for KT and brought on resolution. I watched as a splash of clear liquid came out of the tip of KT's small sex. Three times KT spasmed uncontrollably and three times a small fountain of thick liquid arched and splashed onto the hard wood floor, catching the light as it arched through the air like priceless little diamonds.



All told it was perhaps a half-teaspoon's worth but it was obvious to us girls that this was a boy's fulfillment.

Then KT started to cry.

## ***The Warehouse Party by Gary McCrae***

[A reminiscence recounted by Gary McCrae]

[**San Francisco**] The 1960's is fondly remembered but many people who are now in their 80's. For the rest of you, well, you just have to read the stories and perhaps smile. Not everything from the 1960's was memorable mind you – the loss of two Kennedys and a King, the Viet Nam War, the Hong Kong Flu – but the decade was about youthfulness and about fun. It would be about racing to the Moon and beating the Ruskies. It was the time of the baby-boomers, of which I was one, a boy from Victoria who had meandered down to California to live the Cali lifestyle. And what a life-style!

The 1950's had been staid and proper. That long ten years was all about Ike, and the bomb and flashy cars and a boring, albeit pleasant, home life. But such pleasantries were not for everyone. There were the adventurous types, boys and girls (mostly boys until the pill came along).

You might wonder why the Cali life was so full of hippies and deadheads. It may have simply been that in the States you had three coasts, the East, the Gulf and the West ... the East was too prim and proper, the Gulf too rugged and still the frontier... on Cali anything could go and no one would really care. Oh, and the weather, let me tell you about the weather here in Cali ... it never snowed and only seemed to rain when the rain was expected. And it rarely rained on anyone's parade.

On the East Coast you had New York, Greenwich Village, Andy Warhol and the Factory ... and a different Martini for every day in the month. On the Gulf you had New Orleans and Mardi Gras ... which might have started on a Thursday but would continue for as long as the bourbon and bathtub hooch held out. On the West Coast ... well it was perhaps one big party of you knew the right people. Lucky for me I did.

Who were the right people? It depended who you were and what you wanted in life. Being an artist, I wanted to hang about with other creative people. In San Francisco you didn't have to look very far to find them. Or perhaps they found you. I was a graduate of the *Rudolph Schaeffer School of Art and Design*. Somehow I had acquired a reputation for my creativity, most fabric work in the Notam style.

At the time I lived in a four story walk up in the Mission District and had a neighbor who took a liking to me. She always seemed to be prowling about when I left for work or came home late at night. I don't know how she did it ... perhaps she asked the right people the right questions ... but she knew an awful lot about me. But the situation was not mutual. I didn't really know much about her. It is not that she grew on me ... she sort of glommed on me. She wanted me to take her out ... and 'show her the sights.'

This was odd for me for I was the 'out-of-towner' and she had grown up in Cali. I think she was lonely, because she started to call me 'her man.' She said this to the postman who delivered our mail; To the grocery at the corner store;

The druggist at the end of the block ... and then to me (I was the last to be told the news). She wanted to be taken out.

Oh boy ... complications. But they were of the pleasant kind. She was a petite girl a few years younger than me. A bouncy brunette, well read, at least of the popular genre. She was well turned out in her simple fashions. She had few pretenses, except, of course towards me. Having a soft heart I let her play out that charade.

‘Will you take me out?’ Her eyes were luscious pools of emotion. If she were a kitten she could sit on my lap with those eyes.

A kitten has a way with people. It is not an imposing way, just a persistence that can’t be faulted. She purred and purred and purred, until I could not say no to her.

To stop her purring I relented. “Ok ... where do you want to go and what do you want to do?”

“This Saturday ... let’s do something together this Saturday evening.” She seemed most insistent. I could have said no ... I should have said no ... but I didn’t.

Well one of the few carry-overs from my ‘50’s up-bringing was my Saturday night was bath night; a warm bath, a good book and perhaps Sinatra on the radio. Yes ... I know ... how quaint, but the rest of my week is so busy that I

don't have much time to wash between my toes, behind my ears nor even scrub my back.

But she was most unrelenting. "Saturday night ..." like Chinese water torture ... drip ... drip ... drip ... "Saturday night ..."

All during the week I asked "and what about Saturday night?"

And all during the week she answered enigmatically "you'll see!"

By Friday she had me around her little finger. I caught her, for once, arriving home with her arms full of two grocery bags, and being a gallant dandy I took them off her arms and she invited me into her apartment, two floor down from mine, for a glass of wine. I sat at her kitchen table as she set out her groceries. What is the difference between 'putting away' and 'setting out?' you may ask. She had bought things for a get together – wine, crackers, hors d'oeuvres and cheese.

I asked her whether this 'lay-out' was for Saturday Night. She just smiled enigmatically. 'Just wear something nice,' she replied.

Yes ... needless complications. I wondered if I should step in front of a tram and break my leg ...

Though I was worried I managed to get a good sleep that night since I knew I was going to need it ... Saturday Night ... what had she planned for our Saturday Night?

The following afternoon, around 4 she ordered us a taxi and when it arrived around 6 she handed the driver a small piece of paper. As we settled into the back seat she turned to me, smiled and said “trust me ...” I had seen her smile often before, but this smile had an edge to it.

Have you ever been told by a friend ...”trust me.” And, what resulted from this? Something good I hope. As I recount what our Saturday Night would become I leave it to you to decide what it became ... if you get my meaning,

It was a surprise as we left the fashionable parts of ‘Frisco behind us and made our way to the seedy warehouse district. Most of the buildings were old and abandoned, except one, the one we pulled up to. The taxi man gave us a wondering look ‘ you’re the third fare I have dropped off here this evening ...’

We got out and started to the door. There were two bouncers but they were unexpected. Instead of being two mighty gorillas. They were two fashionably dressed women, one with a phone in her hand. I guess someone at the other end of the phone would give the nod.

My friend smiled and one of the women replied in kind. The other one spoke a word or two into the phone. There was a pause then a nod and then we were in.

The ground floor of the warehouse was empty, dark, dusty and grey. The only colour and light was near the freight elevator at the back. As we walked across the floor, my friend's high heel shoes produced a clickety-clack sound that just made the room seem twice as hollow and four times as ominous. What had I gotten myself into, I thought during the long and *horrorisant* trod to the elevator.

Again, two very fashionably dressed women at the elevator, one to usher us into the lift, and close the heavy metal door behind us, and the other to operate the heavy metal lift mechanism. The lift operator was as tiny as a mouse. I could see she took all her strength to operate the lever mechanism, but by the smile on her face I knew she was enjoying the whole power trip.

It was a slow ascent to the top floor. And with each passage of a floor the sound of a get together got louder and louder. The sound was hard to describe. It was a mix between a rumble and a rabble. The rumble came from jazz being played live and the rabble came from the myriad of the voices of the party goers.

My friend had set our sights on the most unique party of that '60's season. I had heard rumors that some gathering was going to happen ... they called them happenings, as if they were spontaneous ... but the rumors were just

wisps and whispers, here and there among my circle of creatives. Well this was anything but spontaneous.

The bars to the lift could not be lifted fast enough for my friend she peered through the bars like a hungry tigress before her meal. She looked up at me with eyes that sparkled and a smile that could melt an iceberg.

“Aren’t you glad you trusted me?” She dashed into the crowd. I stepped off the lift and looked around the large floor.

The rabble was a mix of fashionables and hippies. I recognized Allen Ginsberg, John Kerouac and Paddy O’Sullivan. Like three vertices of an equilateral triangle they marked their territory among admiring gaggles of partygoers, mostly women fashionably dressed.

My friend rushed back and grabbed my hand and excitedly bellowed “let me introduce you to someone I know.” The lift door slammed shut behind me and I felt like I was about to be thrown to the tigers. I am not one for parties. Let alone large parties, let alone circuses, but I was here and she was here and well she was pretty strong for her slight height and weight. She dragged me along, through the rabble, parting the people like a Moses parting a troubled waters.

It was to Paddy O’Sullivan she dragged me. He looked up at me with big, bushy, bored eyes as he said “glad you could make it,” above the *horrorisant* sound and patted my friend on her backside with his big, bushy bored hands.



She didn't mind the man handling.

The two started into an unfinished conversation they had from a previous encounter and so I soon felt the third man ... I let them prattle on and smiled meekly from time to time, nodding for effect, and as they got further and further into something to do with *avant garde* poetry I drifted over to the jazz band.

They were in a world all their own. Smoke drifted up from the fags they each dragged on. Its sweet aroma always made me ill, but it was what it was, and it was what was giving them the inspiration to *play jazz*.

I felt a pinch on my backside and whirled around to find my friend holding two beer bottles in one hand and playing the crab with the other. She handed me a beer bottle and then clinked hers to mine.

"Thanks ..."

"For what?" I answered.

"For bringing me here ..."

She waved her beer bottle around the room, spilling some beer onto the floor. She used her right foot to spread the beer around.

I waited until she looked back up at me before I said "shouldn't I be the one thanking you?"

She shrugged her shoulders and drank some of her beer.

To be perfectly honest I am not a beer man but I owed it to her and drank a swig. Wretched stuff beer ... even iced cold ... by the time I had finished the swig she had disappeared. It would be like that for the next hour or so. She would put in her reappearance and then disappear in the blink of an eye. I don't know if she was doing this for her own reassurance, or whether she was keeping tabs on me. I returned back to the *jazz*.

Off in one corner of the floor behind a blind hanging from the rafters something caught my eye. It was the flash of a small Krieg light. Someone was filming. Being a curious sort I drifted over and walked around the edge of the blind to discover to my great surprise a scene out of a Grosz painting. There was a large billiards table with one man and three women. He was fully clothed while the three women were in their dainties. The three women were playing billiards while the man was watching them. A woman was doing the filming. I was about to duck back to the other side of the blind when one of the women waved me to stay.

So I did. I watched as a game of what could only be called strip billiards was played out by the three women. It sort of turned into this:



This isn't an actual picture from that evening, but it is close enough of a similitude.

Then once again, my friend reappeared. She grabbed my hand and tugged me back to the rabble. "Naughty boy," she said with a feline expression on her face.

This time she introduced me to John Kerouac. Again the two of them spoke like old friends. Again I just sat there listening. This time my friend took note, leaned over and whispered, 'don't you want to talk with him?'

"About what?" I whispered back.

"About his writing ... his book!"

"Haven't read any of his writing ..."

She peered at me with such astonishment that Kerouac asked her “what’s the fuss?”

Embarrassed of me and my ignorance she said “oh ... nothing,” to him.

In an understanding fashion Kerouac replied “It’s ok if he hasn’t read my book. Lot’s of folks haven’t read my book” and looking up at me with stern eyes he continued “and never will...”

“Oh he will” my friend said scornfully “oh he will.” Then she turned he back on me as a rebuke.

Fine by me, and I drifted away as she and he launched into some esoteric psychoanalysis of traveling and dreams.

My throat was dry. I was still holding my beer and took another swig. Wretched stuff!

Across the room I could see Allen Ginsberg leaning up against some abandoned crates in an animate conversation with several women. It was then that I realized that there were perhaps four times as many women here as men. The women were all dressed to the nines, while them men, or at least O’Sullivan, Kerouac and Ginsberg were dressed like longshoremen. I was the odd man out in my silks and cashmere. Did I tell you I am a dandy?

Suddenly there was a ringing of the emergency bell on the lift and it was like someone had dropped a fox in among the chickens.

There was a mad dash to the windows and as we looked down we saw a long string of flashing lights and paddy wagons. It was a police raid.

My friend grabbed my hand and dashed us over to Paddy O'Sullivan who didn't seemed at all perturbed by the news. "They do this to me all the time."

I explained to Paddy that I was a Canadian and if arrested they might deport me. He just nodded sideways with his head and started to walk to a dark and almost invisible corner of the warehouse.

Paddy looked over his shoulder and when he saw no one was watching he pressed a panel in the wall and it swung open revealing a spiral staircase leading down. "This goes to the basement. If you follow the chalk lines on the wall you'll get out fine. How are you fixed touring the sewers?"

On the landing was an old wooden crate with several well-used electric miner's lamps. He grabbed one turned it on to check it worked and handed it to me. "You'll need this."

Before my friend could say anything Paddy pushed us both through and closed the panel behind us. We had only one way we could go, down the rusty old spiral staircase for the wall panel had no latch on the inside.

And so I led the way slowly down the spiral staircase, my friend clinging closely to me. “I am scared ...”

“So am I ...” I said this before I could stop myself. Perhaps I should have said something else to her to reassure her, but you can’t blame me for being honest. I was scared.

The air in the spiral staircase was dank, smoky and musty. The smoke followed us in. We slowly inched our way down the spiral. At each landing there was a white chalk arrow on the red brick wall pointing downwards into the dark depths. Her clickety-clack now seemed comforting to me.

“How much further,” she said tremulously.

“I think we are almost to the bottom,’ and indeed we were. There in front of us appeared out of the darkness a large iron door with an equally large iron bar door latch. I pulled at it and it did not budge. It had been rusted shut.

As hard as I tried it would not budge! I put my weight on the latch and pulled, and nothing. We both put our weights on the latch and together we pushed. As if to tease us it slipped a bit and then the rust holding it fast brought it to a grinding halt. The latch was so well made that there was no clearance between the plates and rust had rendered it tight. If only we had some lubricant.

The light flickered and dimmed appreciably, as if it itself was also losing hope. “Now what?” my friend asked as she pressed herself closer to me. I could feel that she was trembling

Yes now what? I thought to myself. We were trapped ... top and bottom. The chill was starting to creep into my bones. My bladder, began to complain. I thought about the beer that I had drank and was about to curse myself for drinking it when a drastic measure crossed my mind.”

Here,” I said to my friend, “point this at the latch.” Handing her the miner’s lamp. It flickered again.

Then I aimed carefully and pissed atop the latch for a split second and then without tucking myself in I pressed against the latch and moved it a tad. Then I stepped back and took aim a second time. The second push moved the latch another few millimeters. But after three tries I had run dry ... and the latch was unseated.

I tucked myself away. “Can you lift me?” my friend inquired dauntlessly.

“Yes!” I had run dry and now it was her turn. I set the miner’s lamp on the floor.

“Turn around,” she said. Then I did I heard the rustling of her dress. She handed me her panties. “Hold on to these for me.” I tucked them into my pocket.

Then she wrapped her arms around my neck. I knew what she needed me to do. I took one step back and heard her say “ffff ... cold.” I imagined her bare backside pressed against the solid door. She placed her shoes against the door. Then there was a nearly silent whistle for a split second before she climbed off my back.

Together we worked the latch. It moved a bit more. With our faces pressed to the door the smell of pee became noticeable over the dank smoky, musty odour of the stairwell.

“Turn around again,” and we repeated the whole contortion a second time. This time she lubricated the latch for a split second longer. Then we worked it.

Almost there!

She hopped on my back a third time and let things rip until she too was spent. “Third time lucky?” she said with a giggle.

We looked into each other’s face for a split second. It was now or never. Together we pushed and pull as hard as we could ... then the latch clunked and the door swung open. The smells of the stairwell was lost in the funk of



the air that forced its way in from the underground. But we didn't mind ... we were free.

She picked up the miner's lamp, grabbed my hand and lead the way. The miner's lamp died that instant. She left it behind and we stepped through the door.

As we stepped into the dank underground we could see the street light streaming from the drain gratings. A few steps past the door was a ladder that led up to our freedom.

We both let out sighs of relief. "Care for some hors d'oeuvres?" She went first up the ladder and in the dim lighting of the place it was eerie how the shadows cast just above her knees. I guess I should have given her back her panties.

I followed her up the ladder and into the empty street thinking ... if only she knew how much I disliked smoked oysters!

## ***Five Poems by Stephanie Cui***

### **Dawn**

Out in the moonlight  
The trees are glowing white.  
They are fully dressed and await the wind's call.

But the wind is a shy girl at four in the morning,  
And she does not come out to play.  
Dawn slowly tip-toes, blueing the sky.  
I am lost on a path so familiar.

Does darkness lock up my eyelids  
With a key that only belongs to dawn?  
I sneak by buildings,  
They seem unrealistic against the early light.  
Windows lit here and there, like the fading stars.

My footsteps are shaky,  
My voice –the only echo remaining in the world.  
The sun rows the moon across the sky, claiming its throne.  
And I step into the day drunk with awe.

### **Two Strangers**

~ a palindrome poem

Two strangers  
Returning to  
Their respective homes  
Both leaving for  
The train that departs at dawn  
Boarding amidst the morning fog  
To another ordinary day  
Through the long and weary journey  
Both remain silent  
Rather than talking to each other  
They put on music in their earbuds  
Until the twentieth day  
After smiles and formal greetings  
They resolve to small talks  
Something is starting to change  
They discover their similarities and many differences  
Revealing their strengths and weaknesses  
Wary of the future and afraid of moving forward  
Suffocated by the fear of being alone  
Day after day  
They sit next to each other  
Dozing off on each others' shoulders  
On the late-night train  
Sharing sorrow and joy

And they whisper secrets  
They pour their souls out  
And they learn to trust  
Placing each other above themselves  
Grateful that they are  
Boarding the same train  
Two strangers who happened to be  
At the right place  
At the right time  
A love story  
Now begins ...

### **Spaceship**

The sun peeks through the branches  
as I walk down the shallow steps of the forest trail.  
I hide my sandals in the tree trunk's shadow,  
going barefoot, my skin burns against the golden sand.

I trace around the ruins of the castles  
like the last soldier on guard in her homeland.  
My eyes sparkle when I see the ocean at its full length.

The sky is a cloudy lens  
between the ocean and the universe.  
I think of the routine of waves, their silver edges,

of starfish on the rocks by the shore,  
and of meteors' tails catching fire.  
I connect the dots of stars to form an island.

A ship slowly dissolves into the light,  
and emerges out of the planet Earth.  
I count for the spaceship to take off.

### **Pieces of Time**

I opened my silver pocket watch, it ticks like  
A girl's high-heels down a school hallway.

The watch is a delicate piece of art, inside and out:  
A tiny train on its face brings me back to a moment  
In my dream.

I dream that I'm at a train station,  
Hidden in the crowd,  
I am alone.

I recognize no one, they pass by so fast,  
They hardly notice me.

The sky's at its most beautiful stage,  
When it will

But not yet darken.

I climb to the highest point of the world,  
And people become raindrops  
Dissolve into the moving waves below.

I wave frantically, I yell,  
My hands are too shaky to grab their attention.  
I wish for someone to comfort me.

But no,  
People are catching trains to their dreams,  
Caught up on journeys to Wonderland.

Time crawls down and kisses my palms lightly,  
There I realize her lips have gone still.

### **I am running in a field with open arms**

I am running in a field on my bare feet  
The paddies all bend their heads  
still green and raw  
Autumn is months apart  
I cannot wait for the golden waves to roar  
and I don't want to fall  
(unless you're there to catch me)

I am running in a field with my flowing hair  
was it the wind or  
is my head under water?  
From each curl there dangles a star  
Jewels I picked out just for my feathers  
A beautiful creature like Medusa  
(I will dazzle you with my glare)

I am running in a field with open arms  
The sun went down for me long ago  
In my last letter I confessed to her  
how I dream of  
Sunset forever  
she granted me this wish because  
(I turned myself into a shooting star)

I am running in a field beneath the purple sky  
your reflection in my eyes  
waltzing with the flowers  
I think I'm running towards thin air  
Is this how to disappear?  
A piece of the world will fit into my arms  
(and bestill the rumbling of my heart)

## ***Ten things to do with a Polaroid Camera by Isabella Montsouris***

I opened the birthday  
gift that my uncle gave  
me. What else could I say  
with thank you but ... may  
I take your picture?

Please do ... he smiled  
do you like your new polaroid?  
I nodded. It took me a while  
to figure it all out. but boy ...  
the first picture I took was a blur ...

I did not wait long enough  
Waiting is hard for me  
It is rather tough to count to ten  
Then tear open the thing and  
See that I had ruined it.

Try again ... the second was much better  
than the first but the flash  
had left him with red eyes



or maybe it was the fact  
he had been drinking?

The third picture I took was  
of my birthday cake, or what  
Was left of it. After my brother  
had taken another big piece ...  
comme un couchon!

The fourth picture was  
of my mother and dad  
who just stood there  
unhappy with their lives ...  
you could see it in the eyes.

The fifth picture I left for  
later when I was alone.  
In the bedroom I stood before  
my mirror and took a snapshot  
of me taking a picture ... of me.

This made me wonder what

wonderful things I might do  
with my new polaroid camera?  
It could be my personal  
window on the world.

I set it on the nightstand  
Next to my bed and got undressed.  
And thought ... but it was getting  
Late and I had school first thing  
tomorrow morning.

Should I take it to school?  
No ... someone would steal it  
For sure. After all it wasn't  
every day a polaroid camera  
was lurking about.

My two best friends asked  
me what I got for my sixteenth  
birthday. And so I told them ...  
new shoes, a new dress, a bra and  
Panties to match and a camera.

A camera! Take our pictures ...  
Take our pictures! And so they  
followed me home after school  
that day and I took a snap of  
each of them in turn.

And they took one of me too  
Leaving just two pictures in the  
camera. Well one had to be  
of the three of us, for sure.  
but something was missing!

It was Jean who knew what to do.  
She whispered it in Nicole's ear and  
She nodded. What? I asked. Jean  
said promise me you will you do it?  
So I did and well ...

This is the best thing to do  
with your two best friends by far  
with the last film in a box of polaroid  
just don't get caught

or your mom will take away your camera!



Can you guess which one I am?

## ***In Praise of St. Sebastian by Rose Lang***

[**Paris**] When you are a student at a Catholic all girl's school learning about love and the facts of life is rather interesting. You have to approach this subject in a very circumscriptive way.

Our school was gated and had a large courtyard at the centre of which there was a nice flower garden that was tended by the novitiate nuns, not much older than we were. Each year some students from the school would decide to give their lives and their loves to God. These students were given a bed in the wing of the school that housed the nuns and upon their graduation from the school would become novitiates. Most of these classmates came from poor families.

The rest of my schoolmates were in a rush to leave the school at the end of the day to flood into Paris and enjoy a brief period of freedom as they made their ways home. *Je n'étais pas si chanceuse ...*

For me, life had few freedoms outside of my school, or my home. Both my parents worked long hours. I did not have *une nounou*, I had my grandmere, who each morning would walk me to school and each afternoon when the end of day bell rang would be there to walk me home again. She lived around the corner from me. I would spend the afternoons with her doing my homework and even had dinner with her sometimes and then stay over when my parents did not want me *sous leur pieds*.

When I was fourteen I discovered that I was no longer a little girl but I was becoming *une jeune femme* as my grandmere would say. Just when we needed to be taught something about ... you know what ... the nuns kept us busy doing silly school work conjugating verbs and doing art projects which mostly were drawing and painting watercolors of the flowers in our school garden.

One morning a gardener came and this caused a stir he being a young and handsome young man in his twenties. He was studying horticulture or agriculture or something like this *à son college* and was doing a practicum in our garden. He looked a lot like Pierre Perrier the French actor.

That morning was sunny and hot and so at some point he decided to take off his shirt ... where within perhaps a minute *la mère supérieure* was there to ask him to put his shirt back on.

I happened to be looking out the window when he took off his shirt and he happened to look up at me staring down at him at the second floor window. I suspect I was not only girl thinking this ... but I wondered who he was and whether he would be a fixture in our little garden. He was there several days toiling with some rock work that needed repair. The garden was as old as the school and our school was well over a hundred years old.

It was strange, but the first time I saw him I imagined him as the central sculpture in our little garden ... like Michelangelo's David. There had once was a little sculpture at the centre of the garden but it went missing once, a prank that one of the girls wanted to play on *la mère supérieure* of the day.

Le petit cerf appeared one morning on her desk within her locked office. How it got in the locked office and who put it there remains a mystery to this day. *La mère supérieure* had not taken it well and so the little pedestal at the centre of the garden stood empty. Rumor had it she had le petit cerf set as a head stone for a poor unfortunate school girl who had died of some mysterious malady. She may have been pregnant ... so the rumors were.

Yes, it is difficult to learn about love and the facts of life at our school, even though by age fourteen we should be told this for obvious reasons.

One afternoon my grandmere could not pick me up from school so I had to walk to her place all by myself. I had my own key to her apartment for emergencies. She wasn't expected home until after 6 and so I decided to take my time walked to her apartment.

As it happened, that same afternoon the young and handsome gardener happen to be leaving our school at the same time and so some of my girlfriends and I decided to walk behind him to see where he might be heading. I think he sort of knew we were there following him and it appeared he did not mind. He actually glanced back at the three of us at one point and smiled.

I think he recognized me and I could feel the smile touch me individually. I started to blush. My two friends noticed this and asked me what was happening. I turned to them and boldly said "... I am getting wet ... you know where!"

*Mon dieu* the giggle carried well over to the gardener who suddenly turned and started to walk towards us with determination. My two friends disappeared in a blink of an eye, leaving me alone to meet him face a face.

“I recognize you,” he said. “You were looking out the second floor window when I took my shirt off the other day.”

I nodded.

“Are you following me?”

I shook my head.

“Where did you two friend go?”

I shrug my shoulders and looked around.

“You’re not much of a talker are you?”

I shook my head and then spoke. “My grandmere told me never to talk to strangers.”

“But I am not a stranger ...” he responded.

I stuttered as I said “I guess not” and could feel my face become more flushed.



Before I knew it he had tugged my sketchbook from my bag and started to look at my artwork. “You like flowers ...”

“That’s what les soeurs ask us to draw ... *les fleurs* ...”

A piece of paper fell from my sketchbook. Before I could grab it back he had it in his hand.

“What’s this?”

I had started to draw a sketch of a man tending a garden. He was without a shirt. It was obviously him.

“Is this me? The shape of my torso is all wrong. You have drawn me in the shape of a woman.” He was right. I had tried drawing myself in a mirror from time to time but I had never tried drawing a man.

“Do you like drawing people?”

I nodded slowly.

A broad smile crossed his face. “Have you ever drawn with a live model?”

I looked down at my feet. I was too scared to look up into his eyes. “No ...”

“Would you like to?”

My heart skipped a beat. “Yes ...”

“Tomorrow is my last day working on your garden so today is your only chance.” My eyes shot up meeting his. His eyes gleamed with happiness,

“Come ... my place is just around the corner.” He started to walk up the street not looking back. Perhaps he was very sure of himself, and knew that I would follow him. Or perhaps he dared not look back if by chance I got cold feet and ran off.

I followed him. I don’t know why I did this, but I did. I looked at my watch. It was barely four.

His place was an old pied-à-terre. It had simple but comfortable furniture and he had a cat which ran to meet him at the door when he stepped in his place. When I stepped into his place his cat was stand-offish with me.

“Make yourself comfortable. Would you like some wine?”

“No ... l’eau minérale.” He brought me a bottle and opened it for me and poured some into a glass and handed it to me before he took a drink directly out of the bottle. Then he said “you know I don’t even know your name.”

“Rose ...”

“Sebastian ...” He offered me his hand.

I lifted mine thinking he would merely shake my hand, but he took my hand in his than bowed politely and kissed the back of my hand. “...like the Saint.” He smiled. “Make yourself comfortable while I take a quick shower.”

Then he left me all alone. I looked down at my hand where he kissed me and felt a flood of happiness. Then I looked around his small world. There was second hand furniture and many paperback books. I stood up and walked over to his bookshelf. It was built into the wall and was entirely filled with books.

I randomly read the title of one. Satre. Another ... Poincaré. A third ... Thomas Aquinas. His library was very intellectual.

I walked over to his desk which stood beneath a window. The sunlight set a glow across the notebook open on the desk top. He was composing a love poem. Ahh, I thought, a romantic.

Time must have stood still while I visited his small world for he suddenly reappeared wrapped in a towel around his waist. He was still wet and was drying his hair with a second towel. He let the towel drop from his hand then walked over to the corner of the entrance to this room, turned around and then leaned back against the wall. He kicked the other towel off himself and lifted his arms above his head. “Draw me like Saint Sebastian.”

The view of him, naked before me took my breath away. My hands shook as I took a pencil from my bag and began to draw him. He was more beautiful than I had imagine. His masculinity came alive before my very eyes.

As I drew him it was so quiet I could hear his breathing from clear across the room. I wondered if he could hear my heart, for it was beating wildly. I drew for perhaps a half hour. Then without a word I grabbed my things raced to the door and was out into the street without looking back. Perhaps it was because I was getting wet and bothered and could not trust myself to be in a room alone with a naked man ...

I managed to arrive at my grandmere's apartment a mere three minutes before she did. I was hot and bothered. When she asked me what I had done all afternoon ... I told her I had a headache and had taken a nap.

The following day there he was in the garden again and I found inside of me enough courage to go and speak with him. Quietly he asked me why I had run off? I tried to explain without really telling the truth. "I had to be somewhere by six." In actual fact I could not trust myself to be there with him.

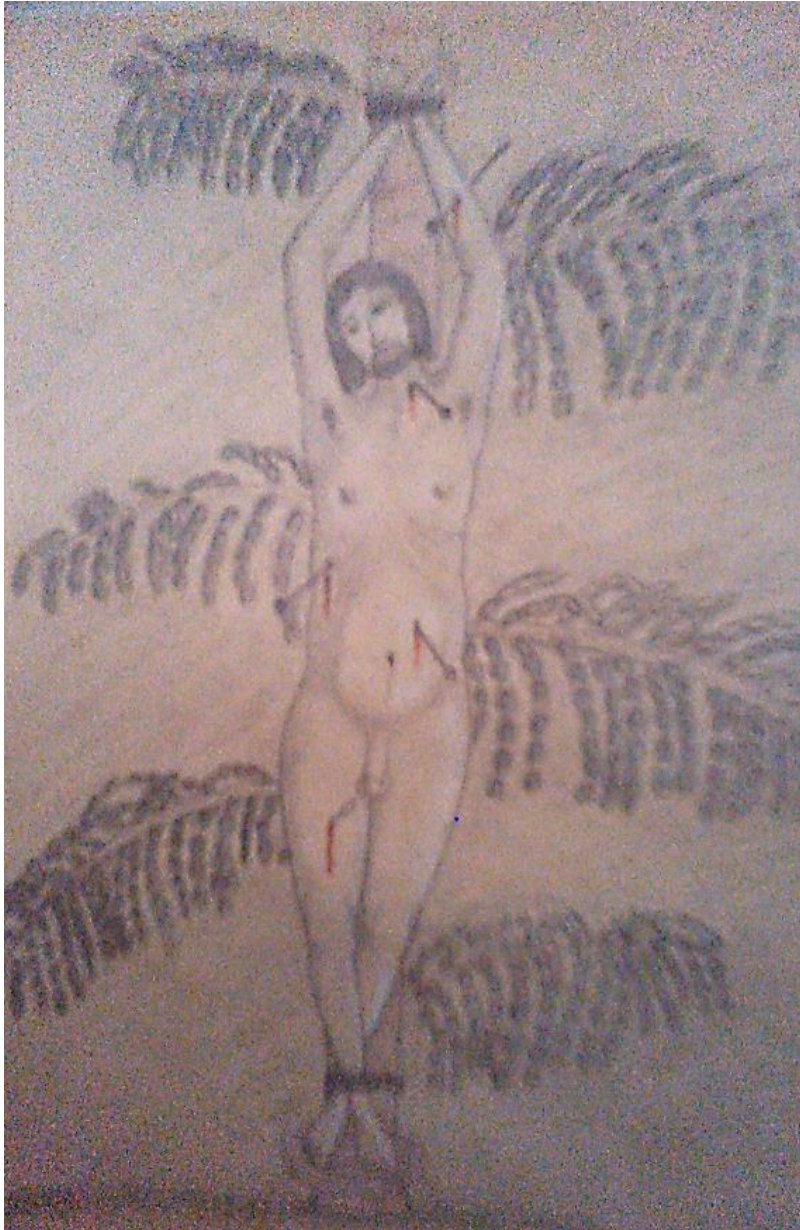
"Can I see you again?" I looked up into his eyes. They sparkled with happiness. I slowly nodded. Sebastian and I are now good friends.

He has let me draw him many times, *sans habillement* but not once did he ask for liberties from me. Sebastian has been a perfect gentleman. I have never asked him ... mais, je me demande s'il est gay.

As for me, I now understand love and the facts of life much better, and I think I have even met a Saint.

I gave my drawing of St. Sebastian to a friend who lives in Vancouver as a birthday gift years ago. All I have left to remember this first encounter with Sebastian is it is a polaroid picture of the drawing.

Not bad for a fourteen year old artist, don't you think?



## ***How are they hanging ... by Isabella Montsouris***

[**Montreal**] My friend KT is now a whole boy, with testicles and all. You recall that I once told you his testicles had not dropped (*Half Girl, Half Boy*, Le Minotaur, Winter 2020).

The surgeons were able to coax his testicles out of his body and they are now where they should be – hanging inside his scrotum. I asked him and he let me watch the transformation his body has gone through and even let me take some pictures to share with the world. His sister tells me he has been acting weird since his surgery.

Before his operation he had no marbles in his marble sack. Now he does ... little ones that we all hope will grow big.



His penis has grown at least three times larger now that his body is producing boy hormones. Before his operation his penis looked like a larger than usual clitoris that some girls have, and his empty scrotum, when folded a certain way, like a vagina.

Before his successful operation the question was whether he would remain a boy or by surgery be transformed into a girl. His body has yet to produce hair anywhere like normal boys would at his age, and he is the smallest boy in his class at school.

We have talked about if his testicles don't grow then he might have them removed and at the very least become a eunuch, for a few years, and then perhaps if he was not happy with that intermediate state, transform into a woman.

KT and I talked about this often and one day he asked me, "*if you could become a boy would you want to?*" I will share with you my answer a bit later.

This brought up the whole question of what it means to be a girl or a boy. Was it just the fact you have a vagina and clitoris – is that what made you a girl. Was it just the fact that you have a penis and a scrotum – is that what made you a boy?

Or was it the fact you had ovaries if you are a girl or testicles if you are a boy?



This is what KT looked like before his operation two years ago.



And this is what KT looks like now.



You can clearly see the difference.

With his operation KT looks complete but we need to wait to see whether his testicles will produce sperm. We know he produces the fluids that a boy does when they come, but we don't yet know whether he will ever produce sperm.



KT admits that he is trying to help matters along ... by doing things that he thinks '*enhances his masculinity* ...' I don't know where he got that phrase but it seems to be his current mantra. He said this to me several times before my curiosity got me to ask what this means ...

KT admitted to me he has been masturbating often. When I asked him he admitted at least twice a day, once in the morning and once at night. I told him that I thought that was normal for boys his age. And what else ...

He says he has also been doing conditioning exercises ... for his penis! This intrigued me so I asked him what these '*conditioning exercises*' were. One was to hold a towel with his penis when he was erect. I couldn't stop giggling

when he said this. “A whole towel!” I asked him, so he admitted ‘well at least a face cloth.’

He had also read about how some foods helped boys with their body development and so that explained why he asked our mother to add some things to her shopping list.

He also has taken to massaging his testicles and also tickling his scrotum with a soft feather.

I don’t know if I should tell you this but I occasionally help KT ‘enhance his masculinity’ by sometimes wearing provocative clothing when he is around and even once I even let him come in and sit on the corner of the bath and chat with me.

And oh ... boys are the only ones that like to please themselves. Last week I kept my bedroom door ajar when I knew he is kicking about. I had heard him masturbating and afterwards I checked his phone out. I found a short clip he took of me on KT’s cellphone.



Honestly, should I get mad at him or should I look the other way? Sure he has invaded my privacy, but I did leave my door ajar ...

Maybe next time ... I ask you ... should I invite him in to let him watch ... and maybe let him ... you know ... let me watch as he enhanced his masculinity?

Oh my answer to his question “*would you want to be a boy?*” What do you think? Girls have more fun than boys don’t we?

## ***Something is Missing from Paradise by Patrick Bruskiewich***

“After almost creating Paradise on Earth, God ... annoyed by the cries of the Cicada ...

and tired out by six days of earnest effort took a break and spent Sunday pondering Pure Mathematics.

God knew that Pure Mathematics had few practical applications and thought it would be pleasant to do some applied mathematics ... geometry in fact ...

*Something is missing from Paradise* God thought ... so starting with straight lines, rectangles and cylinders... he unravelled things ...

God set upon his penultimate design, quickly got bored, borrowed a few bones from man's rib cage and said,

*Time to move onto spheres, pleasant curves and topology ...*

Perhaps that's how God came by creating woman after man?

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